CHINESE PRISON SYSTEM, "LAOGAI"

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Chinese Prison System, "Laogai", 10...

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

APRIL 3, 1995

Printed for the use of the Committee on International Relations

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CONTENTS

WITNESSES

	Page
Mr. Tang Boiqiao, student leader of 1989 democracy movement, Laogai survivor	2
Ms. Catherine Ho, Catholic Nun, Laogai survivor	5
Father Cai Zhongxian, Catholic priest, Laogai survivor	8
Mr. Palden Gyatso, Tibetan monk, Laogai survivor	9
Mr. Liu Xinhu, juvenile prisoner, Laogai survivor	11
Mr. Harry Wu, Laogai survivor	13

APPENDIX

Prepard statements:	
Mr. Tang Boiqiano	25
Mr. Catherine Ho	28
Mr. Father Cai, Zhongxian	32
Mr. Palden Gyatso	33
Mr. Liu Xinhu	38
Mr. Harry Wu	42

HEARING ON CHINESE PRISON SYSTEM "LAOGAI"

MONDAY, APRIL 3, 1995

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND
HUMAN RIGHTS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice at 2:08 p.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Christopher H. Smith presiding.

Mr. SMITH. The subcommittee will come to order.

I am very, very pleased, ladies and gentlemen, to convene this important hearing of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights. It gives me very special pleasure to welcome our distinguished and courageous witnesses.

There are any number of important reasons for which a congressional committee ought to hear from people like those we are about to hear from. Not the least of these reasons is to honor them. Each of these witnesses has experienced things that we can only imagine. Each found the strength to survive and has chosen to bear witness to the truth.

Many of us are already familiar with the story of Harry Wu, who risked his life by going back to China, posing as a wealthy businessman and entering into negotiations with the business of the prison labor system in order to gather evidence of the continued brutality of that system.

Each of the other witnesses, including a Tibetan Buddhist monk, a Catholic priest, a student leader during the democracy movement, and others, is also living evidence of the essential freedom and integrity of the human soul. For this we honor them and we thank them.

Another reason we need to hear from these witnesses is to learn from them. Are the worst things we hear about the Laogai, the reform through labor or Chinese Gulag system, the stories of relentless physical and psychological torture and rape and murder, just isolated horror stories or are they everyday reality? Is there any difference between the treatment afforded political or religious dissidents and that which is meted out to common criminals? Are they a logical outgrowth of the Communist ideology of the Peoples Republic of China regime? Do expanded trade and cultural and political contacts between that regime and Western nations have any discernible effect on conditions in the Gulag system? Do they make these conditions better or perhaps do they make them worse?

Finally, the most important reason we need to learn the answers to these questions is so that we can know what the U.S. policies ought to be to put an end to the horrors of the Chinese Gulag.

For instance, some of us believe that it was a terrible mistake for the President to de-link Most–Favored–Nation status from human rights, as he did last year. Others believe that a gradualist policy of constructive engagement is the best way to bring the regime around to our way of thinking regarding human rights.

Our witnesses today are the true experts on these questions. They have paid deeply with their lives. They have paid deeply with the sacrifices that they have borne. And I know that all of us on this subcommittee are deeply honored to have them here with us today.

I would like to ask our first panel if they would come to the witness table.

But before I do that, I would like to ask Mr. Kim if he would like to make some opening comments.

Mr. KIM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have anything to say except I would like to welcome all of you and I am anxious to listen to your testimony today.

Thank you again.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

I would like to ask Mr. Harry Wu if he would come to the witness table.

Mr. TANG. Tang Boiqiao.

Mr. SMITH. Harry, do you want to go last?

For the record, if you would identify yourself as well as who is accompanying you, please, Mr. Tang.

Ms. COLE. I am Lilli Cole. I am going to help translate for him a little.

Mr. SMITH. OK. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF TANG BOIQIAO, FORMER STUDENT LEADER OF 1989 DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT

Mr. TANG. My name is Tang Boiqiao and I am a former student of Hunan Teachers' College. In July 1989, I was arrested by the Communists because of my organizing and participating in the Hunan student movement. I was held until July 1990 before finally being sentenced to 3 years' detention. My crime was called counter-revolutionary propagandizing and incitement.

In October of that year, I was transferred to the Hunan Province Longxi Prison for reform through labor. In January 1991, I was unexpectedly released from prison.

After my release, I was again arrested because of my continued involvement in the popular movements and human rights activities. Following the summer of 1991, I fled China. In April 1992, I entered the United States and sought political asylum.

My reason for coming here today is to share with you my experiences while in the Laogai.

I was first arrested in July 1969 in Guangdong Province, after which I was held in three different detention centers where I was forced to labor with my fellow prisoners. While at Guangdong No. 1 Detention Center, I made toys which had the words "Made in

China" in English written on them. I was allowed to eat only twice a day.

Next, I was transferred to Changsha in Hunan and spent more than a year at the Changsha No. 1 Detention Center. During this time I suffered through the darkest and most hopeless existence. For more than 4 months straight, I was questioned about my case an average 10 hours a day in what the Communists call exhaustive tactics. This Laogai forced its prisoners to produce match boxes. There were no labor rewards but every month the cellmates, which had the highest production numbers, were given one cheap cigarette a day. The police or officials forced the prisoners to work day and night so that they could report increased production output and receive cash incentives. We would work for at least 12 hours per day. The longest day was one when we worked 23½ hours with a half-hour food break.

Because I would refuse to work, the public security police would often arrange for the other prisoners to abuse and beat me. One day I was beaten three different times by seven or eight young prisoners, two of which were convicted murderers. The first time, because I was unwilling to be forced to labor, they beat me until I bled from the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. The second time, because I resisted when they tried to force me to kneel down, they used anything they could find in the cell to beat me, including a wooden stool, heavy wooden sticks and metal cups and bowls. The last time they beat me while I could not move and lay on the floor hunched over.

At this, the public security police were still not satisfied, so that evening they held a struggle session and ordered every prisoner in the Laogai to viciously beat me. That night I developed a fever of 104 degrees, which persisted for more than a week. I was unable to even sit upright.

While there were many methods used in torturing people at this Laogai, the most often used tools were the electric police baton and shackles. There were more than 10 kinds of shackles, including thumb shackles, so-called earth shackles, all kind of wrist shackles, chain shackles, chain-link shackles, door frame shackles, heavy shackles and others. The most simple method was to conduct a political study class where the prisoners needed to attend for long periods of time while shackled. I personally experienced electric shocks and many kinds of shackles.

The Laogai prisons used different types of abuse and control than those of the detention centers. After I was transferred to the prison, when I was first assigned to a prison brigade, we were shown the three unforgettable phrases that were written on the wall of the prison entrance. "Where are you? What are you? What are you to do here?"

Later in the daily political study classes, we needed to follow these questions with the responses, "This is a prison. I am a criminal. I am here to receive reform through labor." We also had to sing three songs at the beginning of every political study class. The songs were "Socialism is Good," "Without the Communist Party There Would be no New China" and "Emulate Lei Feng.' Lei Feng was a 1950's Chinese Communist martyr.

The kind of billboard you see above the prison there has these three slogans that the prisoners see when they enter the prison, "Where are you? What are you? And what are you doing here?" And the other sign there says, has the slogans, "Labor production is the way, reform is the main goal."

The words "Socialism is good" begins "Socialism is good. Socialism is good. Everyone in a socialist society is improved." The lyrics of "Without the Communist Party, there would be no new China" are "Without the Communist Party, There Would be no New China, the Communist Party is united for the people. The Communist Party is united to save China."

The meaning of the last song is that we should all be like the Communist hero Lei Feng. That is, "Loyal to the revolution, loyal to the party, standing in the field erect and unwavering, Communist thinking emits knowledge." I realized that this was how they would force us to reform our thinking, so I refused to sing the three songs.

The police used many methods to try to intimidate and coerce me into cooperating, and in the end, I was sent to the prison of prisons, solitary confinement. Its length and height are barely enough to hold a man, and it has solid walls with only a tiny slit in the door. It very easily makes men think like animals in a cage.

These are only some of the stories of my time in the Laogai, yet all of the mistreatment and abuse I suffered in the Laogai is just a drop of water in a great river. When you think of all the abuses of the millions of Chinese citizens still condemned in the Laogai, my story is just the tip of the iceberg.

Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Tang Boiqiao appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. I want to thank you for your very eloquent testimony and for bringing the horrors, however succinctly you described them, to the attention of this subcommittee. I know that many of the members will be reading this transcript and will be reading your description of what you went through personally and what others have gone through with a great deal of empathy and the sense of horror. And I think we lose that sometimes in Congress when we are so far removed from it and we make policy in somewhat of a vacuum and, again, to know what we are a part of and complicit in when we are dealing with the Chinese economic system and products manufactured in Laogai like what you made could be well finding our ways onto to our own shores, makes us—should make us act more responsibly and to bend over backwards not to be complicit in that kind of horror.

So I thank you.

What I thought we might do in the subcommittee is ask all of our witnesses to testify first and then to ask members of the subcommittee to pose questions at that time.

I would like to call to the witness chair Catherine Ho. Mrs. Ho is a Catholic who was accused of counterrevolutionary crimes. She spent 21 years in the Chinese Gulag system.

And I would ask you to proceed however you may wish. Your full statement will be made a part of the record.

STATEMENT OF CATHERINE HO, CATHOLIC NUN

Ms. HO. My name is Catherine Ho.

One of the goals of the Laogai camps is to break the human spirit through torture of the body. But even worse than the bodily abuses is the unceasing assault of the prisoner's thoughts and individual will. This is especially true of the suffering endured by the millions of women condemned to the Laogai.

I was born into a well-educated family in Shanghai. My good parents sent me to an excellent Catholic high school. There I became a Catholic. I studied very hard and should have had a bright future. Instead, I was arrested and imprisoned by the Communist government before I was even 18 years old. I was arrested on September 8, 1955, as was our bishop in Shanghai, Cardinal Kung. Kung is now in the United States receiving medical care.

Between 1953 and 1955, the church-run schools and hospitals in Shanghai were taken over by the Communists. The church's charitable institutions were simply closed. The foreign missionaries had already been expelled as imperialists. The Chinese priests and the bishops were all targets of the Communists and were either killed or arrested one after another.

Most of the Christians were forced to go through brainwashing. They faced losing their jobs or educational opportunities. And they also faced being sent to the Laogai camps or prisons to suffer because of their faith. Religious people were continuously persecuted by Communists.

We did not oppose the government. We only wanted to practice our religion but the Communists said it was a crime against China. The only reason I was put in jail was because I was an active Christian. I was a member of the Legion of Mary, which is a devout missionary organization. And I did missionary works. I refused to renounce our church and did not want to be a part of the Communist-controlled church.

Because of my faith, they put me in jail. They isolated me from the outside world. They tried to confuse me with all their propaganda. But I knew they told lies. I could not go against my conscience. I could not deny my faith. I could not give up my faith, which is such a precious gift that many Christians were willing to die for it.

At first they sentenced me to 7 years in the Laogai Prison in the labor camp as a counterrevolutionary. I was not allowed legal representation. I did not even have a trial. When they found out that I had still not changed my mind after my 7 years, they would not let me go. They kept me in the Laogai camp for 21 years.

The Chinese Communists cannot tolerate religion, especially the Christian religion. They have a hatred for everything which involves believing any god above or beyond human kind. To this day, they are still persecuting and imprisoning religious believers.

I would like to now give you some examples of the systematic abuse and the persecution of the Laogai camps. These Laogai camps are in no way like the prisons we know of in this country. No way. Words are not enough to convey the horrible day-to-day realities of the prisoners in the Laogai.

Physically we were always hungry, tired, and filthy. The women were forced to do heavy labor, like plowing the desert, raising cat-

tle, or running a tea farm. The physical torture of our body was so extreme that many women's menstruation ceased in many of the women in the Laogai camp. This put great strain on both a woman's body and her mind. There were never any medical treatments of this or other sicknesses.

Despite these exhaustive and grueling conditions, we were forced to produce high-level products. For example, I was in a Laogai camp tea farm for about 10 years. This is the Laogai tea farm.

The women prisoners were forced to plant the trees, take care of the plants, and then process the tea leaves into red or green tea. I spent another 4 years weaving silk and cloth in Laogai factory. On the surface, it was a textile factory in Hangzhou, but the workers were all women prisoners doing forced labor. In the factory, there were two constant pressures upon us. First was the physical fatigue. I was forced to work very hard for 14 hours a day. I had to fight exhaustion just to keep from falling into the machines. Second was the constant supervision. Since we were told that the products we made were for export to foreign countries, they watched our every move to be sure we made no mistakes. If there were mistakes or someone did not appear to be working hard, we were severely punished. They used ankle fetters, handcuffs, solitary confinement, and other means to punish us.

Today I often wonder if the tea I drink or the silk I wear comes from Laogai camps and is made by all those poor Laogai slaves still suffering in China.

Daily we were assaulted mentally. We were continually brainwashed. We were not allowed to say our prayers or to read bibles. I remember clearly my first day in the detention center. I kneeled down on the muddy ground, bowed my head, and begged for the Lord to give me the strength. The warden immediately scolded me, "Who told you to kneel down? Even at the door of death, you keep up your superstitions. This is a counterrevolutionary activity."

In the Laogai, we were not allowed to hear and read anything but the Communist propaganda. We had to spend 2 hours everyday reading Mao's book and reciting the prison regulations. I remember one 60-year-old sister who made a set of small rosary beads out of thread so it will not be discovered and confiscated by the guards.

The continuous brainwashing helped destroy all human love and was a denial of all basic human rights.

Spiritually, it was a constant struggle. We faced constant despair and always heard the discouraging and threatening comments of the authorities. A prisoner had to confess her crime everyday, which meant scolding oneself and accusing oneself of being guilty of the greatest of crimes against the people and the government.

Every prisoner was degraded. They minimized their own value of being human. They were separated from their families and society. They were tortured in a dark hell that had no foreseeable end. They fought the despair and hopelessness of thinking that they were to spend the rest of their lives as slaves in the Laogai.

One woman refused to work on Sundays. She would say prayers instead of singing revolutionary songs in front of Mao's portrait. One day she was dragged out to the field where we were working and beaten to death in front of all of us.

I said the Communists' aim is to torture the body and break the human spirit in every possible way and at every possible opportunity. When the warden told me my beloved sister had died, he simply said, "The People's Government acted humanely. It is all over now. You should not cry because that is against the rules. And it would have a bad effect on the feelings of the others about thought reform." They did not let us laugh. They even did not let us cry.

They succeeded to the point where to many it looked like there was no future, no hope. The prisoners in the Laogai camp were always in a deep depression. I myself prayed to God to let me die. I wanted to die more than I wanted to live because the circumstances were too horrible. Even if you did not want to continue living under this condition, they would not let you die. There was a constant suicide watch.

God sustained us nevertheless. My faith preserved me. God's grace helped me live through this nightmarish journey. Finally my prayers were answered. After my parents had written many, many letters to the Government from Hong Kong, my husband, my son and I were allowed to leave the Laogai in December 1978.

Today, I sit before you, which I had never dreamed 20 years ago. I sit before you to take this opportunity to tell you the truth, to tell you the facts as I have myself experienced. But I speak not for myself but for the thousands of brothers and sisters who are still living this terrible existence.

Thank you for listening to me tell my story. I hope that you may better understand the realities of the Laogai through my account of it. Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Ho appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Mrs. Ho, I want to thank you for your very moving testimony and just observe that there is a conference on women slated for Beijing in the fall of this year and the voice and the testimony, the witness that you have made today is something that needs to be heard at that conference.

Unfortunately, it is most likely going to be a conference that has more of a Western-oriented focus and issues of the abuse of women in the Laogai probably will not get mentioned at all. But I think it behooves us, and I know from my position as chairman of this subcommittee I will push hard to try to ensure that you and people who have the kinds of experiences that you have had at the hands of your jailers get an opportunity to make your voice known at that very important conference.

And I do want to thank you for your witness and certainly your courage under such extreme pressure and your witness for faith and the grace that surely had to have been within you to preserve you during that very difficult time. It is very, very inspiring indeed. So I thank you for that testimony.

I would like to—and again at the conclusion of our witnesses, I would ask my subcommittee colleagues and myself to—we will pose questions to our fine witnesses.

I would like to ask Father Cai if he would come to the witness table at this time.

Father Cai is a Catholic priest. He was accused of counterrevolutionary crimes and for that spent 35 years in the Chi-

nese Laogai. A remarkable man who has persevered and who has had perseverance under such extreme situation, and who is here to give us an account of what went on.

And I would ask, Father, if you would proceed as you would like. Your full statement will be made a part of the record.

STATEMENT OF CAI ZHONGXIAN, CATHOLIC PRIEST

Mr. CAI. My testimony of my Laogai is that of a labor-camp life. My name is Cai Zhongxian. I am a Catholic priest of the Society of Jesus.

I was ordained in 1940. I was arrested and charged as a counterrevolutionary in 1953 because of my refusal to cooperate with the Communist authority and denounce the Roman Catholic Church.

I was unexpectedly released without explanation in 1956. It turned out that the Communist hoped that the leniency showed to me would convince me to collaborate with the Party to persuade other Catholics to become members of the officially sanctioned Patriotic Catholic Church. This Patriotic Catholic Church is nothing more than a Communist puppet organization. When I refused to cooperate, I was once again arrested. So I was detained twice for a total of 7 years at the Shanghai Detention Center without charge or trial until I was finally sentenced to a 15-year term in 1960.

I was then sent to a Laogai camp in Jiangxi Province, which served as a brick factory. A lot of people avoided dying of starvation mostly because they supplemented the rationed food by eating frogs, snakes, and rats.

In 1962, four other priests and I were confined in a 6 by 12 foot windowless room that was filled with an inch of standing water. Despite this ill treatment and the other inhumane conditions, I continued my services as a Catholic priest. I even successfully converted some of the guards who were charged to watch us.

At the completion of my sentence, I was 62 years old. But I was not fully released at that time. The Government forced me to accept forced job replacement in the Laogai labor camp because I was originally charged with the counterrevolutionary crime.

I knew that a forced-job replacement assignment means a life sentence laboring at the Laogai labor camp. I labored at the Nanchang No. 4 prison for 11 years as a forced-job replacement worker.

In 1981, at the age of 74, I was again arrested for my continued activity as a Catholic priest. I was sentenced to serve another 10-year term as a Laogai slave.

In 1988, I was released fully and unexpectedly. I was 81 years old at the time of my release. I served a total of 35 years in the labor camp. I cannot begin to tell you how many people, among them many of my friends and my disciples disappeared completely for every one that survived.

Thank you for inviting me here. I hope I have helped you gain an understanding of the Communist government's willingness to use the Laogai to destroy its citizens' human rights. There are still priests in the Laogai camp.

Thank you.

[The statement of Father Cai appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Father, very much for that moving testimony as well. I am 42 years old, and when I think that you have spent 35 of your years in the Laogai simply because of your faith in Christ, it is truly moving and I know every member of this subcommittee will take and remember your testimony.

The Chinese Communists obviously do not discriminate when they repress, and all people of faith who follow the lead of God as they believe it is leading, are equally repressed. And to give a unique perspective as it relates to the suffering of the people of Tibet, we are very pleased to welcome Palden Gyatso, a Tibetan monk, who spent, like Father, 32 years of his life in the Chinese Laogai, and will give the insights that he got from that and will recount and give witness to the suffering and cruelty that was imposed upon him.

Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF PALDEN GYATSO, TIBETAN MONK

Mr. GYATSO. My name is Palden Gyatso.

Mr. KELSANG. I am Kelsang, who will be the translator for him today.

Mr. GYATSO. I have longed for this moment most of the last 36 years and it is like a dream come true, and I would like to thank the chairman and the other members of the committee for giving me this opportunity to be here today. And I consider it not only as an honor but also a responsibility to inform the U.S. Congress about the abuses that Tibetans are suffering today in Tibet.

I have been in prison for 24 years and for 8 years I was in a Chinese labor camp and during my days in prison, the Chinese never fed us enough and we were forced to rummage through the food that was meant for the pigs. And we were also driven to eat things like leather, bones, and grass, and it could be any bones, human as well as animal.

So since food was not enough, we were forced to eat leather that we wore, and we also had to resort to eating things like worms and, as I said, grasses.

And a lot of people died due to starvation, and I was around 30 years old then, and some of the other things that went on during my stay in prison, along with not getting enough food, we were also made to work in the fields. We were substituted for cows in plowing the field.

The reason why the Chinese put me in prison was because I had called for more freedom and I had demanded more rights, and the Chinese considered that to be engaging in revolutionary activities, and these instruments that you see before me today are some of the tools that were used to carry out the torture on me.

Now, this is a piece of the electric baton that was used and forced through my mouth and what happened was since this had electric shocks, it totally damaged my teeth.

And I also saw Chinese prison officials inserting this into a woman's vagina, and even today I know of women who have difficulty in going to the bathroom because of the damage that they suffered.

And I still bear today on my body some of the marks that were inflicted because of this torture. For instance, because of the self-tightening handcuff here, even today I have scars on both my

hands and they do not function properly. And some of the other things that the Chinese did was keeping me suspended in the air, and then beating with rifle butts and piercing me with bayonets and pouring hot water over my body. And as a result, I have injury marks on my head and on my hands.

And I was even a witness to a couple of people who were sentenced to death. As soon as the Chinese announced that someone was to be sentenced to death, what they did was they would force that political person of engage in singing songs and dancing. The bullets that were used to kill someone, as well as the ropes that were used to hang someone, even the expenses involved for that would be deducted from the convicted person.

These practices that go on in Chinese prisons and labor camps in Tibet reflect the overall abuses going on today. And in this regard, I would sort of especially like to mention the trip by Ambassador Lilley in April 1991.

And I have kept this diary to this day, and this is a diary that I kept while I was in prison.

[Slide.]

Mr. GYATSO. And I have a slide of the day and the month when then Ambassador Lilley visited Drapchi Prison in Lhasa. That is the site of the Utritu prison in Lhasa where I spent 9 years.

That is a shot of Sangyip prison where I spent 10 years.

That is a shot of the Drapchi prison where I spent 7 years.

And that is a map of Lhasa and the ones in red, they show the detention facilities in Lhasa and they number about eight today. And the ones in yellow and orange are military and police complexes. And the ones in green are really what is left of the traditional Tibetan area in Lhasa today.

In April 1991, then Ambassador James Lilley, along with two American officials, visited the Drapchi prison. And what Palden Gyatso and his other friends in prison did was they tried to present to Ambassador Lilley a petition detailing the Chinese abuses in prison. But what happened was Ambassador Lilley—he was shaking his hands with one of the prisoners and on his other hand he had the petition, but then one of the Chinese guards just snatched away the petition and after Ambassador Lilley left, the petition was given to the warden of the prison, and because after he left, the Chinese officials called in the Army. They had to go through a really hard time.

And the other aspect of the visit was that every time when such a delegation does visit any Tibetan prisons, the Chinese put on a very different show. The prisons are cleaned up and more food is provided. Just to give the impression that the prisoners are healthy and that there is nothing wrong with them.

And two of the individuals connected with presenting the petition to Ambassador Lilley, Lobsang Tenzin and Tenpa Wangdak, were detained in solitary confinement because of the action.

The prisoners were then transferred to Nepal Tramo labor camp close to Lhasa. After that the army came in and then they started beating us up and started torturing us.

These are only a few instances of the various atrocities committed by the Chinese on the Tibetans, and whatever I have told you today is true and I am really glad that I have had a chance to come

here today and inform you all about this. And please remember that there are still people inside Tibet today who are going through similar experiences that I have gone through.

Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Gyatso appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Gyatso, I thank you for your, again, very moving testimony and by actually visually displaying the implements used to repress people and to torture them. You bring an additional dimension to our understanding, feeble as it is, to what it must be like to live under the horrors of this terrible Gulag system.

And, you know, what we have been hearing so far, and I know my colleagues and I all feel this, and that is you are witness, and Father Cai, you as well, to unspeakable horrors. And to think that this Government, the U.S. Government, and many other Western governments, continue to trade and to do business with the dictatorship in Beijing as if none of this is going on, or as if it can be put in a compartment and all other trade and commerce and diplomatic niceties can occur with all of these unspeakable horrors going on baffles me and angers me, and I think it does you as well.

Again, I think on this committee and among Members on both sides of the aisle who care so deeply, our hope is to raise human rights to the level that it deserves. It ought to be central in our relationship with the Peoples Republic of China and any other country of the world, not a sub-issue. Regrettably it is a subissue at the current time.

I would like to ask Mr. Frank Wolf, Congressman Wolf, if he would like to join us. Mr. Wolf is a leader in human rights and has been very active, particularly on the issue of China and the use of Gulag labor and the importation of those products, and religious freedom as well.

I would like to call our final panel before going to questions to appear before the subcommittee. And the first to speak will be Mr. Liu, who is the son of a counterrevolutionary, a man who was first imprisoned at the age of 13. A man who, because of the affiliations of his father, who was in the prior government, was targeted for this mistreatment, and then spent a total of 25 years in the Chinese Laogai.

Mr. Liu, if you could present your testimony, and your full statement will be made a part of the record, and you may proceed as you care to.

STATEMENT OF LIU XINHU, JUVENILE PRISONER

Mr. LIU. My name is Liu Xinhu. My father was an official in the former government. The Communist Party, on the pretext that he would disrupt labor discipline, arrested him and sent him to a re-education-through-labor prison camp in 1958. He was sent to the Baimaoling Farm to serve his sentence.

In 1958, I was 13 years old. Because I was the eldest son in the family of a counterrevolutionary, the Communist government found an excuse, which had no legal precedent, and sent me to live at the same Laogai prison farm as my father.

After being released from the Laogai sentence at the farm in 1966, I was ordered to continue forced labor at the farm as a forced-job placement worker.

In 1974, I was once again labeled a counterrevolutionary element because of my political attitudes. I was placed under even stricter controls. I was detained until my release in 1983. During the 25 years I spent in the Laogai, I suffered innumerable beatings and torments.

The Baimaoling farm is internally known as the Shanghai No. 2 Laogai general brigade. It is located in the southeast area of Anhui Province. Its scale is enormous and it holds on average 50,000 Laogai prisoners, laojiao prisoners, and jiuye personnel. It produces tea, rice, valves and toys, as well as other goods.

Besides the farming that I did at the Laogai prison, I was also part of a so-called corpse brigade. At that time there was massive starvation in China and people were dying by the scores. And so they needed people to bury the bodies, and I was a part of that corpse brigade.

My father and I were detained in different sections of the farm and we were not permitted to see each other. The public security police only told me in 1993 that he had died and that I had to go and claim the corpse. Once at the crematorium, I saw his cold and pale body. I was given these clothes that he was wearing and I cried bitterly. I felt that my father was braver than I was because he dared to determine his own end to his difficult life and gain his freedom.

[Slide.]

Mr. LIU. The first pair of clothes that you saw were the clothes that I took off my father's body in 1993.

These clothes are the clothes that I wore. And these are also clothes that I wore.

I now live in the United States and I have a family of my own. I deeply hope that my children and all other children, as well as future generations, do not have to suffer these kinds of tortures and difficulties.

Thank you all very much for your concern about the Chinese Laogai system.

[The statement of Mr. Liu appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Liu, for your testimony and, again, by showing us the prison garb. You remind us again that this is a reality that has to be dealt with. It is not something that is in the past. It is current. It is as current as today. And unfortunately our policies vis-a-vis the PRC act as if the rogue government that has the power in Beijing somehow should be treated with respect. And when you so disrespect your own citizenry to use torture and to impose so much pain and cruelty, it behooves this Congress I think to up the ante and be much more concerned about human rights than we are with profits.

So I thank you for your very strong statement.

Our last witness will be Harry Wu. Harry Wu is someone who many of us have come to know and greatly admire because of his tremendous courage. Not only did he spend 19 years in the Chinese Laogai, but he also has gone back risking his own life, possible imprisonment and death, to bring more information out to bear further witness to the continued repression by the Peoples Republic of China.

And, Harry, we are indebted to you for providing this information. Anyone anywhere in the world who cares about human rights has to look up to you as one of the great giants and leaders in the cause of human rights.

I would ask you to, if you would, present your testimony at this point.

STATEMENT OF HARRY WU

Mr. WU. Ladies, gentlemen, my name is Wu Hongda and English name is Harry Wu.

I was born in Shanghai in 1937. During my second year of college, in 1957, the students were encouraged by the Communist Party to express their opinions and concerns about the direction of the country. Although I initially kept quiet, in the end I offered a few criticisms, including my opinion that the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 was in violation of international law, and I stated my feelings that the Communists were treating the common people as second-class citizens. Because of these comments, I was denounced as a capitalist counterrevolutionary rightist.

I was arrested and, without a trial, sentenced to life in the reeducation labor camp in 1960. I was told this was because of my poor political attitude. My life sentence was mostly a result of my family's political background because my father was a banker. While I was held in the Laogai, my mother died. I found out 15 years later she committed suicide by taking sleeping pills shortly after she was told of my arrest. I discovered this only after returning to Shanghai years later to collect her ashes.

In December 1969 I was released from my Laogai sentence. That did not mean I was freed from the camp and allowed to return to my home. Instead, I was forced to resettle permanently at the Laogai coal mine and serve as a forced-job placement personnel. In other words, I was not released at all and forced to continue as forced labor until my final release from the Laogai system in 1979.

I spent 19 years in the Laogai at 12 different forced labor camps. I was forced to do slave labor at agricultural farms, a chemical factory, a steel plant, and a coal mine. I was regularly denied food and during one period nearly starved to death. Torture permanently damaged my back. I had my arm broken during a beating. I was nearly killed in a coal mine accident.

I had to become a beast to survive day-to-day life in the Laogai. Today, all over the so-called new China there are millions still fighting to survive the Laogai.

Mr. Chairman, the subcommittee has heard today short descriptions of the experiences of six Laogai survivors. I would like to now present a brief overview of the origins, structures, and scope of the system.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I will submit a more detailed statement of this for the record.

Every totalitarian regime must have means to control and suppress opposition. The Nazis in Germany had their concentration camp systems throughout Europe, which housed millions of people whose religion, race, or political views made them targets of persecution. The vast Gulag in the former Soviet Union was first created to remove the White Russians from society soon after the revolu-

tion which brought the Communists to power. Throughout its history, the Gulag served as a destination, often final, for both penal criminals and those who opposed Stalin and other Soviet leaders.

The Chinese Laogai, in its origins, was quite similar to the Gulag. But Mao adapted the Soviet model to the Chinese context. The Laogai became a tool of the people's democratic dictatorship in fighting dissent within an ongoing class struggle.

The official function of the Laogai is to remove counter-revolutionaries and other criminal offenders from the population and to place them under state supervision. In the Laogai, prisoners undergo thought reform and reform through labor and are reshaped into new socialist persons. Arrests and sentences, even for common criminals, are based as much on class background and political standing as on criminal activity and only reinforce the true nature of the system: absolute political control.

The term "laogaidui" is used as shorthand by the Chinese people in much of the same way Gulag was used in the Soviet Union. It instills fear in the average person. The existence of the Laogai remains the central human rights issue in China and Tibet today.

As a system, its scope, numbers of the camps and prisoners, degree of cruelty, and a fundamental inhumanity long surpassed the Soviet Gulag.

Today I want to focus on the Laodong gaizao, laojiao, and jiuye components. One thing, all of them were mixed together into one idea to use the so-called thought reform and forced labor.

Official Communist Party documents from the 1950's say that the Laogai is, "The process of labor reform of criminals which essentially is an effective method of purging and eliminating all criminals and counterrevolutionaries."

In 1988, the Ministry of Justice published a criminal reform handbook which summed up the purpose of the Laogai as follows: "The primary task of our Laogai facility is punishing and reforming criminals. To define their functions concretely, they fulfill the tasks in the following three fields: punishing criminals and putting them under surveillance; reforming criminals; and, organizing criminals in labor and production, thus creating wealth for the society."

This is clear acknowledgement of the state-run slave labor of the Laogai system.

Laojiao, or reeducation-through-labor, plays a unique role within the Laogai system. It was created as a last resort, extreme alternative to the existing reform through labor policy. It was established in the 1950's after the Communists had nearly eliminated all of the remaining enemies of the revolution from the capitalist classes.

The Communist labeled this the highest level administering of discipline. To this day, the Chinese Government maintains that reeducation-through-labor is not part of the judiciary system. In fact, as in its early days, the Government intentionally used the reeducation-through-labor policy to imprison people in forced labor camps, without even a trace, for periods of 2 to 3 years.

Evidence exists indicating that reeducation-through-labor is more widely used today than ever. And a large number of the students, intellectuals, workers, and religious believers and dissidents are currently locked in the reeducation camps for their criminal activi-

ties. These camps are fundamentally no different from the other forced labor camps in the system.

Thought reform and reform-through-labor are both the principal methods of the Laogai camp. There is a saying in the Laogai camps that goes,"There is an end to Laogai and laojiao, but jiuye is forever."

Before 1980, almost 90 percent of the Laogai prisoners and laojiao prisoners were never fully released from the system. They were simply transferred into a forced-job-placement personnel or what we call jiuye. Personnel, within the camps.

The official explanation of the forced-job placement is, "To fully implement labor reform policies and ensure public safety." This practice continues today on a large scale, but not as much as prior to 1980. Part of the reason for forced-job placement is that the Communists realize they cannot trust former Laogai prisoners or laojiao prisoners; the people who have suffered greatly and seen the true nature of the Communist system. Also these prisoners are necessary to maintain production in the camps considering the constant flow of the new prisoners. In other words, their experience in the operation of the Laogai is necessary to keep the system working.

All Laogai prisoners are forced to labor to compel reform and become new socialist persons. New arrivals are subject to immediate, daily, lengthy integration sessions and forced to admit their crimes. These sessions may last days, weeks, or months. In some cases, they last years.

The official Laogai policy is reform first, production second. The prisoners of the Laogai face constant brainwashing. The value system of the society as a whole has no place in the Laogai. The prisoner is stripped of his morals, his beliefs, his religions, his individual will, his sense of right or wrong. They are encouraged to stand together with the Government and denounce their crimes. They are completely retrained to follow the moral order of the Communist Party and its society.

If a prisoner resists, he or she is tortured. There is much evidence coming to light that thought reform is less and less successful. This apparently persuaded the Laogai officials to rely more and more on physical torture. This situation is understandable as it becomes clear that even the Communists no longer believe their own ideology.

But struggle meetings are still held. Mao Tse Tung's teachings are still used and those that show a poor political attitude are beaten.

Laogai prisoners reform progress is judged in part by their productive output. Prisoners have a work quota and punished if it is not met. Food is withheld. Beatings are given. Solitary confinement is common and already limited family visits and contacts are eliminated.

In adding this as summary, Mr. Chairman, I would like to address the number of the people who have gone through the Laogai system and how many are still there in China and Tibet today.

The Chinese Government 2 months ago stated that 10 million people had been sent to the camps since they came to power. And at this point, 2 million are still in some 685 camps. This is a ridicu-

lous figure. Who can believe that in a country of 1.2 billion people, over the 45-year history, only 10 million people have been in prison.

One should never, of course, believe any number they give to the public. In fact, no one will probably ever know the true number of the people they executed and sent to the camps.

I am submitting for the record my detailed analysis.[1] I estimate that since 1949 more than 50 million people have been Laogai or laojiao prisoners. Remember, laojiao or reeducation-through-labor is not considered by the Communists to be imprisonment. Therefore, they do not count these people in either their 10 million figure or in the current two million figure.

Neither do they today count those in the province, county or village detention centers, military prisons or secret prisons.

We at the Laogai Research Foundation have documented nearly 1,100 camps, a list of which I am submitting for the record. Our list does not include detention centers or military or secret prisons, nor is it a complete list of labor camps. We are learning of others every month.

Mr. Chairman, if we consider reform through labor, reeducation-through-labor, and forced-job placement personnel prisoners alone, I believe the Chinese Government has between 8 to 10 million people in the Laogai today.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for offering us, survivors of the Laogai, from China and from Tibet, the opportunity to improve your understanding of the world's most extensive forced-labor camp system. A system which is a human rights abuse of momentous proportions.

This is the first hearing on the Laogai ever conducted by any democratic legislative body in the world. We are very grateful. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Wu appears in the appendix.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Wu, for your very, very moving statement. You know, we have been in contact with one another for many, many years now, and the information you bring forward, the understanding and the depth of knowledge has been indispensable to this Member's understanding, and I think the understanding that many of us have about the Laogai system.

We have never had a hearing where so much pain was remembered and recounted, where so much torture and abuse so vividly displayed, or where the brave witnesses wept openly over the sorrow that was imposed upon them by a brutal regime.

If my math is right, the six of you, the six survivors, when added together, have about 135 years of prison experience filled with torture, abuse, lack of food, and I know that I will remember for many, many years this hearing and the information you have imparted to us, and hopefully it will not just be information. It will be something we can do something with. And that is to try to raise the stakes in this fight, to try to promote human rights in China.

I would like to recognize Mr. Royce for any statement he might make and for any questions he might want to pose to the witnesses.

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[1] This analysis is included in Mr. Wu's testimony which appears on page 42.

I would also ask and invite our prior witnesses, if they would like, to come to the table to your right, and any question posed, if you would like to answer it, please feel free to.

Mr. Royce.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The Tibetan monk who testified, Palden Gyatso, I wanted to ask a question of him and his interpreter, if I could.

And that question is, given the numbers of Tibetans who were sent into the camps and given the type of torture and what occurred in those camps—I notice in the written testimony that this monk was forced with others to stomp on pictures of the Dali Lama and to denounce the Dali Lama.

Do you think the persecution you suffered was part of a campaign to exterminate leaders of the Tibetan people?

Mr. GYATSO. The Dali Lama was always made out to be someone whom we should not respect, whom we should not follow, because he preached about religion. So there was definitely an attempt to bring him down and we were encouraged to oppose him.

Mr. ROYCE. I notice Chinese authorities maintain that prisoners are allowed to practice their religion in prison. I would ask this question of the Tibetan monk and I want to ask the question of Father Cai as well.

If this is true, what we are told by Chinese officials?

Mr. GYATSO. Yes, it is true that the Chinese claim that they provide religious freedom in prisons, but the reality is that this is not true. And I can offer several instances which support that. For instance, during our times in prison, from the barley that was served, we used to make little beads for the rosary. And if that was found out, the Chinese would confiscate that, and we were beaten for that.

And similarly, if we were found with scriptures and any other items that were religious in nature, they were taken away from us and we were beaten for that.

Mr. ROYCE. I think it is particularly shocking. The Laogai handbook, Mr. Chairman, which I have been looking at here, which purports to show each camp, the camp location, the population of the camp, this is hundreds of pages of documentation about the existence of camps all across China.

It is, I think, very commendable, Mr. Chairman, that you have held this hearing today, and I think this hearing was a long time coming. But it is my hope that this begins to focus some real questions on the authorities in China.

I know when we meet with those authorities, we hear them state that freedom of religion is increasing in China today, and, of course, we do hear about the underground household churches, that they are thriving.

I want to ask Father Cai if he believes that that is true.

Is religion beginning to thrive in China today?

Mr. CAI. I speak in Chinese.

The INTERPRETER. Father Cai mentioned that the Government has promised freedom of religion, but that is not the case in China. But in actuality they cannot control all of the movements of the church in China. And so at the time it looks like there is some free-

dom for underground churches. But the problem is they cannot express their beliefs publicly.

There are some people who meet in their churches at home, but they are always under the threat of arrest at any time because the underground churches are illegal according to the laws in China.

There are some cases where they have mass at home with maybe around 30 people, if they have the facilities for that, but most of the homes, they are not big enough for them to have that type of activity. And so overall there is no freedom of religion in China, even though there is a so-called patriotic church, but overall that is not the church that we know.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you.

You know, Mr. Chairman, of the many tragic things we have heard today and the testimony today, one of the ironic things we have heard today is about the torture of prisoners who attempted to communicate some information to U.S. diplomats when U.S. diplomats were overseas.

And I just want to say that I am very grateful that you are each here today to try to communicate to the U.S. Government not only the hell that you lived through, but also to do it in a way that makes certain that the U.S. Government takes some steps to try to discourage this type of torture around the world in the future.

And, Mr. Chairman, I will turn the gavel over to you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Royce.

You know, in addition to that, to add to that, I do think you send some hope back to those who are suffering. Somehow, if the word can get through to those who are in the Laogai, that people of your stature, who have suffered, as they are suffering now, are before the U.S. House of Representatives giving witness, bearing witness, to the brutality of the regime at a time when unfortunately many Western governments are trying to curry favor with that brutal regime.

I would like to ask Mr. Wu if you would answer a question.

You know, we did surrender—we, I mean the U.S. Government, surrendered a major tool that could have been effective in promoting human rights when it de-linked MFN with human rights last year. The administration I think made a terrible mistake, after promising to use significant progress in human rights as the backdrop for whether or not MFN would be renewed for another year.

Another tool, however less it may be, is the memorandum of understanding that was agreed to during the Bush years and then carried forward under the Clinton years.

I know myself, I have some major problems with it in that I think it is too weak, ineffective. I myself and Congressman Frank Wolf visited one prison camp, Beijing Camp No. 1, and tried to talk to some of the prisoners there. There were some 40 political prisoners there because of their participation in Tiananmen Square, either witnesses or demonstrators. And we were denied that opportunity.

But based on my understanding, the U.S. Government has very, very limited access to those prison camps where we have some suspicion that goods are being made for export to the United States.

Mr. Wu, if you could speak to that MOU if you would, or anything related to it that you think would be appropriate.

Mr. WU. Mr. Chairman, as you know, there is a very limited access as a tool to handle the human rights issue in China. I think there are only two things, MFN and MOU. MFN was attached as a condition in 1993 as a must-do condition about the forced labor product importation-exportations issue. But you know the Chinese. There are a lot of facts to prove the Chinese Government are liars and that they have not complied with the conditions.

But ironically, the American Government says the Chinese have complied with it, so last year the President de-linked the MFN with the human rights issue. And they say, well, probably we can cover the human rights in a different area, different, you know, and so far we know that the American delegation is working very hard. At the Human Rights Commission in Geneva last month, in February I think. But, you know, they did not get any significant improvement. The resolution did not pass.

When I was in Geneva, I had a meeting with Red Cross International. Two senior officials told me they visited China several times. They were very pessimistic to have a deal, have an agreement with the Chinese because the Red Cross have their own regulations. They want to visit the camp, whatever they want, and whenever they want. And they want to interview the prisoners without the Chinese officials along with them, but Chinese—we never can get it.

So the Red Cross International efforts did not have much of a result.

And today, you know, much new information tells us, including the Waging Sun, after the de-linking of the human rights with trade, and this appeared, and new arrested, and many new people was put in the camp and there is nothing we can do about it.

And also about MOU. I think you asked the State Department to come here to testify. I would assume they feel very bad about it. It is because the MOU does not work. So far, we know they have had chances to visit several labor camps but none of them successed. For example, last December the International Trade Court made a judgment—they judged that this engine was made in No. 2 prison of Yunnan Province. It is illegal to import this to the United States.

But, you know, American representative went to the place, which was arranged by the Chinese official but actually it was sanitized and they did not see anything. And so far, until today, I would say each other visit to the prison camp has not worked.

The MOU does not have teeth over there. But we know there this trade continues. We have lots of evidence. Later we will present to you, publicly present to the Congress, to present to the administrative, everyone, to prove that illegal Chinese Laogai products are constantly and continually coming to United States. And also to London, Paris, Australia, all over the world.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Wu.

Catherine Ho, I would like to just raise a question with you. You mentioned Cardinal Kung. On my last trip to China, a year ago January, I was joined by Joseph Kung, his nephew, who was absolutely tenacious in our meetings with Government officials in promoting human rights, religious freedom in particular, and pointed out that to a very large degree, the official church, which is largely

run, if not totally run, by the Communist Party, is a way to control religious believers, and those who are outside of the very narrow parameters set by the Communist Party are in for repression, torture, and incarceration in many cases.

I wanted to ask you—you mentioned the number of women that were in—that there are a number of women's camps. Mr. Wu mentioned 8 to 10 million.

Do we have any estimates as to how many women are incarcerated in the Laogai?

Ms. HO. I think 5 percent is woman prisoner.

Mr. SMITH. And to the best of your knowledge, the Catholic Church, in particular, has that been singled out, especially in light of Li Peng's year-old new decree, that added new powers to the police, has that resulted in more arrests and more believers, both Protestants and Catholics and people of other faiths—and anyone who might want to answer this, please do—being subjected to mistreatment by the Government?

Ms. HO. The older prisoners in the labor camp, if you have no political attitude, will suffer for their beating and punishment. As for Catholics or Christians, we mostly worry about two things. The thing we most worry about is, first, the women. Most women prisoners, we worry about two things. First is we worry about that nobody will want us. Because women in the Laogai camp, even for married women, their husband might have divorced them. And for unmarried women, nobody outside of the Laogai camp would like to marry them. This is our first worry. And second is when the Communists are—in the Laogai camp, they found out some—especially the Christians, they were educated as smart, beautiful, so they force you to marry them. And there is no freedom. You cannot choose your fiancee or husband without their permission. So their permission is necessary, in a case like mine, for example. I married my husband because he is a prisoner—he had been in the labor camp for 17 years. And they gave me permission, we married, but they supervised us. So they think under their supervision we still are controlled. Even our generation they can control. Always they are slaves in the labor camp.

But luckily my husband suffered for the same belief in religion. So our wedding was so poor, no music at all, no flowers at all. But we had God's blessing. So this is the fact in the labor camp for women.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Tang, as we all know, some of those who were involved with the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy demonstrations have been let out of prison. Most of those individuals, it was simply because their time, their sentences, had been completed, although the Chinese Government made much fanfare over their release.

Since the decoupling of MFN, many of us have noticed a rise in the number of people who are being put into the Laogai. We know that Wei Jingsheng has been recaptured, if you will, and, in my view, speaking internationally from a human rights perspective, illegally detained by the regime, what do you make of the trend right now in terms of China?

We have a number of people in the administration who believe that because we are trading more with the Chinese that somehow

that is automatically leading to more openness, and yet we see this parallel rise in repression.

What do you make of that?

Mr. TANG. I basically agree with your point of view. Generally most people are disappointed about the MFN decision from the point of view of its effect on human rights.

Whether or not MFN is approved or disapproved, most people feel generally that it has an effect on human rights.

Many of my friends in China, actually they did something less than us, but they were arrested. If they did the things before, suppose would not be arrested. It means the human rights situation is much worse now.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Palden Gyatso, you had testified earlier that when Ambassador Lilley visited a prison camp in Lhasa when one of the prisoners sought to give him a list and did not succeed, that very, very bad things happened to him and to others as a result of that.

To the best of your knowledge, do you know if our Ambassador, Ambassador Lilley, made any attempt to try to get that information knowing full well that that prisoner was pretty intent on getting something to him?

While that is being translated, I would just observe that many of us are concerned, when we do visit prison camps, because I myself have had this happen, where somebody tries to get something to you, and you have got to grab it quick because if they get it, they being the prison guards, they may do some very terrible things to the person trying to get that information to you.

Again, Mr. Wolf and I had that happen to us at another prison camp in the former Soviet Union, and luckily I got to the paper before the prison guards, so I know how serious that can really be. For the inmate to take that risk, those who do visit, whether they be from the Red Cross, nongovernmental organizations, or from parliaments, I have to make sure that they get the information and ensure that the person trying to pass that through to a friendly hand does not suffer repercussions as a result of trying to get that information out.

Mr. GYATSO. When we offered the petition to Ambassador Lilley, the petition listed all the grievances against the Chinese, and we were hopeful that the Ambassador would get a chance to read it and the world would know what was going on in Tibet. But unfortunately the Chinese got hold of that petition and to the best of my knowledge, the Ambassador never followed up on that. And as I said in my testimony that we really went through a hard time after the Chinese found out that we had attempted to submit a petition.

And this incident basically highlights that even such a high official as Ambassador Lilley, that the Chinese did not hesitate to openly snatch the petition from his hand. So where does that leave ordinary prisoners like us?

Mr. SMITH. Let me ask one final question.

If any of you would like to make a recommendation as to what you think the Congress ought to do, what policies should we—I mean the first and foremost thing is to get the information out, and you have done mightily in helping to get the information out. And the transcript of this hearing record will be very widely dissemi-

nated to Members of Congress, Members of the Senate, and elsewhere, and thankfully we have a good representation of media, both domestic and international, so that your words will go forward.

But are there any particular policies that you would like to ask us to champion on behalf of those who are suffering in Tibet and in China?

Mr. WU. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I hope American Congress becomes the first country democratic legislative body in the world, to condemn the Chinese Laogai.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Royce, do you have any additional questions?

Mr. ROYCE. Yes.

Mr. Gyatso.

Mr. GYATSO. I have come from very far today to testify before you, Mr. Chairman, and I have come with high hopes the U.S. Government and the Congress especially has been very supportive over the years and I would like to request of you and the Congress to continue supporting the cause of Tibet. And the situation in Tibet today has worsened and I would like to request your continued support.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much. And you will have it and I do believe—unfortunately our ranking member, Mr. Lantos, could not be here, but I know he, speaking for the Democrats, shares this very strong commitment to human rights in China. The proponents and the opponents are bipartisan, regrettably. There are those that feel that trade supersedes human rights and maybe in their own way they feel that it actually advances human rights. I think the record shows the opposite. The evidence clearly shows that there has not been advancement in China. It is actually getting worse. So I think our vigilance and continued work need to be enhanced as this Congress unfolds.

Let me also say again, and I know I speak for other members of the subcommittee, that we are truly honored to have so many people, six individuals, who have paid so dearly for their beliefs and for their commitments to human rights and to God. And I know that I am greatly humbled just being in your presence and I know that we collectively will fight hard in this Congress to promote human rights in China.

I would also hope that every CEO, every businessman operating in China, would have the opportunity to hear the testimony that you have presented today. I think that so often—and I have met with many business people who do business in the PRC, including the American Chamber of Commerce in Beijing—they have a Pollyanna view that somehow this does not really happen on the scale and to the degree that you have borne witness today. They are only fooling themselves.

People are being tortured as we speak. And we should not do business with a dictatorship that is very much analogous to the Nazis 50 years ago, who tortured and repressed their people, the people who happened to be Jewish or happened to be of some other religious belief or some other race.

We need to speak with one voice in the United States. Unfortunately there have been many voices. However well meaning, the administration has dropped the ball. And it is up to the Congress

in a bipartisan way to speak out boldly and effectively for those who are being oppressed. We need to hold hands with the oppressed, not with the oppressor. And you today, again, have borne tremendous witness to the reality of what is going on in China and I know that this subcommittee will champion the cause of human rights in China, and you have aided mightily in that respect.

Without any further comments, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:12 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

TESTIMONY OF **TANG BOIQIAO**, LAOGAI SURVIVOR

BEFORE THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

APRIL 3, 1995

My name is Tang Boiqiao, and I am a former student of the Hunan Teachers' College. In July of 1989, I was arrested by the Communists because of my organizing and participating in the Hunan students' movement. I was held until July of 1990 before finally being sentenced to three years detention. My "crime" was called "counter-revolutionary propagandizing and incitement". In October of that year, I was transferred to the Hunan Province Longxi Prison for reform through labor. In January 1991, I was unexpectedly released from prison.

After my release, I was again arrested because of my continued involvement in the popular movements and human rights activities. Following the summer of 1991, I fled China. In April of 1992, I entered the United States and sought political asylum. My reason for coming here today is to share with you my experiences while in the Laogai.

I was first arrested in July of 1989 in Guangdong Province, after which I was held in three different detention centers where I was forced to labor with my fellow prisoners. While at the Guangdong Number 1 Detention Center, I made toys which had the words "Made in China" in English written on them. I was allowed to eat only twice a day.

Next, I was transferred to Changsha in Hunan and spent more than a year at the Changsha Number 1 Detention Center. During this time, I suffered through the darkest and most hopeless of existences; for more than four months straight, I was questioned about my case an average ten hours a day, in what the Communists call "exhaustive tactics". This Laogai forced its prisoners to produce matchboxes. There were no labor rewards, but every month the cellmates which had the highest production numbers were given one cheap cigarette a day. The police forced the prisoners to work day and night so that they could report increased production output and receive cash incentives. We would work for at the least twelve hours a day. The longest day was one when we worked for 23 and a half hours, with a half-hour food break.

Because I would refuse to work, the public security police would often arrange for the other prisoners to abuse and beat me. One day, I was beaten three different times by seven or eight young prisoners, two of whom were convicted murderers. The first time, because I was unwilling to be forced to labor, they beat me until I bled from the eyes, ears, nose and mouth; the second time, because I resisted when they tried to force me to kneel down, they used anything they could find in the cell to beat me, including a wooden stool, heavy wooden sticks, and metal cups and bowls; the last time they beat me while I couldn't move and lay on the floor hunched over. At this, the public security police still were not satisfied, so that evening they held a "struggle meeting" and ordered every prisoner in the Laogai to viciously beat me. That night, I developed

a fever of 104 degrees, which persisted for more than a week. I was unable even to sit upright.

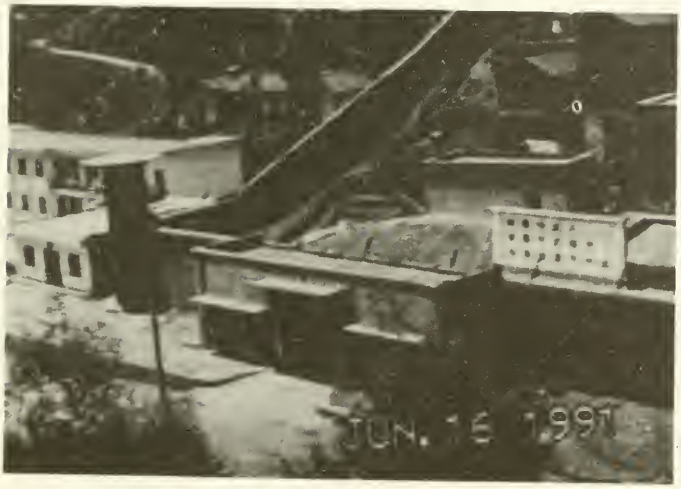
While there were many methods used in torturing people at this Laogai, the most often used tools were the electric police baton and shackles. There were more than ten types of shackles, including thumb shackles, "earth" shackles, all kinds of wrist shackles, chain shackles, chain link shackles, door-frame shackles, heavy shackles, and others. The most simple method was to conduct a political study class where the prisoners needed to attend for long periods of time while shackled. I personally experienced electric shocks and many kinds of shackles.

The Laogai prisons used different types of abuse and control than those of the detention centers. After I was transferred to the prison, when I was first assigned to a prison brigade, we were shown the three unforgettable phrases that were written on the wall at the prison entrance: "Where are you? What are you? What are you to do here?" Later, in the daily "political study" classes, we needed to follow these questions with the responses, "This is a prison. I am a criminal. I am here to receive reform through labor." We also had to sing three songs at the beginning of every "political study" class. The songs were "Socialism is Good", "Without the Communist Party, There Would Be No New China", and "Emulate Lei Feng" (Lei Feng was a 1950's Chinese Communist martyr).

I still remember the songs. The words of "Socialism is Good" begin, "Socialism is good/ Socialism is good/ Everyone in a socialist society is improved". The lyrics of "Without the Communist Party, There Would Be No New China" are "Without the Communist Party, there would be no new China/ the Communist Party is united for the people/ the Communist Party is united to save China/ Its leaders go forward towards the light/ It is the great leader of all the people." The meaning of the last song is that we should all be like the Communist hero Lei Feng; "Loyal to the revolution/ Loyal to the Party/ Standing in the field, erect and unwaving/ Communist thinking emits knowledge". I knew that this was how they would force us to reform our thinking, so I refused to sing the three songs. The police used many methods of trying to intimidate and coerce me into cooperating, and in the end I was sent to the "prison of prisons" - solitary confinement. Its length and height are barely enough for a man's size, and it has solid walls with only a tiny slot on the door. It very easily makes men think like an animal in a cage. It can be said that being confined in a small cage for a long period of time will certainly make any man go insane.

These are only some of the stories of my time in the Laogai. Yet all of the mistreatment and abuse I suffered in the Laogai is just a drop of water in a great river. When you think of all of the abuses of the millions of Chinese citizens still condemned to the Laogai, my story is just the tip of the iceberg. Thank you for your time in listening to my personal story of the terrors of the Laogai.

7. The large white signboard over the gate reads;
"Who are you? - I am a Criminal."
"What is this place?" - "This is a Laogai Camp."
"What are you to do here?" - "I come here to Labor and Reform."
The picture is of Shanxi Number 4 Laogai Camp, the Wangzuang Coal Mine. (Tang Boigiao)



TESTIMONY OF **CATHERINE HO**, LAOGAI SURVIVOR

BEFORE THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

APRIL 3, 1995

My name is Catherine Ho.

One of the goals of the Laogai camps is to break the human spirit through torture of the body. But even worse than the bodily abuses is the unceasing assault on the prisoner's thoughts and individual will. This is especially true of the suffering endured by the millions of women condemned to the Laogai.

I was born into a well-educated family in Shanghai. My decent parents sent me to an excellent Catholic high school. I became a Christian while there. I studied very hard, and should have had a bright future. Instead, I was arrested and imprisoned by the Communist government before I was even 18 years old. I was arrested on September 5, 1955, as was our bishop in Shanghai, Cardinal Kung, who is now in the U.S. receiving medical care.

Between 1953 and 1955, the church-run schools and hospitals in Shanghai were taken over by the Communists. The church's other charitable institutions were simply closed. The foreign missionaries has already been expelled as "imperialists". The Chinese priests and bishops were all targets of the Communists and were either killed or arrested one after another. Most Christians were forced to go through brainwashing. They faced losing their jobs or educational opportunities, and they also faced being sent to the Laogai camps or prison to suffer because of the their faith. Religious people were continiously persecuted by the Communists.

We did not oppose the government. We only wanted to practice our religion. But the Communists said it was a crime against China. The sole reason I was put in jail was because I was an active Christian. I was a member of the Legion of Mary, which is a devout missionary organization. I did missionary work. I refused to renounce our church and did not want to be a part of the Communist controlled church.

Because of my faith, they put me in jail. They isolated me from the outside world. They tried to confuse me with all of their propaganda. But I knew they told lies. I could not go against my conscience. I could not deny the truth. I could not give up my most precious gift, my faith. Many Christians were willing to die before giving up their faith.

At first, they sentenced me to seven years in the Laogai as a "counter-revolutionary". I was not allowed legal representation. I did not even have a trial. When they found out that I had still not changed my mind after my seven years, they wouldn't let me go. They kept me in the Laogai camp for 21 years.

The Chinese Communists cannot tolerate religion, especially the Christian religion. They have a hatred for anything which involves a belief in any God above or beyond human kind. To this

day, they are still persecuting and imprisoning religious believers.

I would like to now give you some examples of the systematic abuse and persecution of the Laogai camps. These Laogai camps are in no way like the prisons we know of in this country. Words are not enough to convey the horrible, day to day realities of prisoners in the Laogai.

Physically, we were always hungry, tired, and filthy. The women were forced to do heavy labor, like plowing the desert, raising cattle, or running a tea farm. The physical tortures on our bodies were so extreme that menstruation ceased in many of the women. This puts great strain on both a woman's body and her mind. There were never any medical treatments of this or other sicknesses.

Despite these exhaustive and grueling conditions, we were forced to produce high level products. For example, I was in a Laogai camp tea farm for about ten years. The women prisoners were forced to plant the trees, take care of the plants, and then process the tea leaves into red or green tea. I spent another four years weaving silk and cloth in a Laogai factory. On the surface, it was a textile factory in Hangzhou, but the workers were all women prisoners doing forced labor. In the factory, there were two constant pressures upon us: first was the physical fatigue, I was forced to work very hard for fourteen hours a day. I had to fight exhaustion just to keep from falling into the machines; second was the constant supervision, since we were told that the products we made were for export to foreign countries, they watched our every move to be sure we made no mistakes. If there were mistakes or someone did not appear to be working hard, we were severely punished. They used ankle fetters, handcuffs, solitary confinement, and other means to punish us.

Today, I often wonder if the tea I drink or the silk I weave comes from a Laogai camp and is made by all those poor Laogai slaves still suffering in China.

Daily, we were assaulted mentally. We were continually brainwashed. We were not allowed to say our prayers or to read the Bible. I remember clearly my first day in the detention center. I knelt down on the muddy ground, bowed my head, and begged to the Lord to give me strength. A warden immediately scolded me, "Who told you to kneel down? Even at the door of death, you keep up your superstitions. This is a counter-revolutionary activity." In the Laogai, we were not allowed to hear and read anything but Communist propaganda. We had to spend two hours every day reading Mao's book and reciting the prison regulations. I remember one sixty-year-old Sister who made a set of small rosary beads out of a thread so it would not be discovered and be confiscated by the guards. This continuous brainwashing helped destroy all human love and was a denial of all basic human rights.

Spiritually, it was a constant struggle. We faced constant despair, and always heard the discouraging and threatening comments of the authorities. A prisoner had to confess her crime everyday, which meant scolding oneself and accusing oneself of being guilty of the greatest crimes against the people and government. Every prisoner was degraded. They minimized their own value of being human. They were separated from their families and society. They were tortured in a dark hell that had no forseeable end. They fought the despair

and hoplessness of thinking that they were to spend the rest of their lives as slaves in the Laogai.

One woman refused to work on Sundays. She would say prayers instead of singing revolutionary songs in front of Mao's portrait. One day, she was dragged out to the field where were working and beaten to death in front of all of us.

I said the Communists aim was to torture the body and break the human spirit in every possible way and at every possible opportunity. When the warden told me my lovely sister had died, he simply said, "The People's Government acted humanely...it is all over now...you should not cry because that's against the rules and it would have a bad effect on the feelings of the others about thought reform". They succeeded to the point where to many it looked like there was no future and no hope. The prisoners in the Laogai camp were always in a deep depression. I myself prayed to God to let me die. I wanted to die more than I wanted to live because the circumstances were too horrible. Even if you didn't want to continue living under those circumstances, they wouldn't let you die. There was a constant suicide watch.

God sustained us nonetheless. My faith preserved me. God's Grace helped me live through this nightmarish journey. Finally, my prayers were answered. After my parents had written many, many letters to the government from Hong Kong, my husband, my son, and I were allowed to leave the Laogai in December 1978.

Today, I sit before you to take this opportunity to tell you the truth. To tell you the facts as I have myself experienced. But I speak not for myself, but for the thousands of brothers and sisters who are still living this terrible existence. Thank you for listening to my story. I hope that you may better understand the realities of the Laogai through my account of it.

15. In Zhejiang Province, where Ms. Catherine Ho was forced to labor, growing tea is the primary forced labor. (Catherine Ho)

16. Nanhu Farm is a Laogai camp involved in a joint venture with a Japanese company. It produces Japanese style, steamed green tea for export to Japan, France, and the United States. (Catherine Ho)

TESTIMONY OF **FATHER CAI, ZHONGXIAN**, LAOGAI SURVIVOR

BEFORE THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

APRIL 3, 1995

My name is Cai Zhongxian. I am a Catholic priest.

I was ordained in 1940. I was arrested and charged as a counter-revolutionary in 1953 because of my refusal to cooperate with the Communist authorities and denounce the Roman Catholic Church. I was unexpectedly released without explanation in 1956. It turned out that the Communists hoped that the leniency showed to me would convince me to collaborate with the Party to persuade other Catholics to become members of the officially sanctioned "Patriotic Catholic Church". This "Patriotic Catholic Church" is nothing more than a Communist puppet organization. When I refused to cooperate, I was once again arrested. I was detained twice for a total of seven years at the Shanghai Detention Center, without charge or trial, until I was finally sentenced to a fifteen-year term in 1960.

I was then sent to a Laogai camp in Jiangxi Province which served as a brick factory. I avoided dying of starvation mostly because I supplemented the rationed food by eating frogs, snakes, and rats.

In 1962, five other priests and I were confined in a six-by-twelve foot windowless room that was filled with four inches of standing water. Despite this ill-treatment and other inhumane conditions, I continued my services as a Catholic clergy. I even successfully converted some of the guards who were charged to watch us to Catholicism.

At the completion of my sentence, I was 62 years old. I was not fully released at that time. The government forced me to accept "forced-job-placement" in the Laogai camp because I was originally charged with a "counter-revolutionary crime". I knew that a "forced-job-placement" assignment meant a life sentence laboring at the Laogai. I labored at the Nanchang Number 4 Prison for eleven years as a "forced-job-placement" worker.

In 1981, at the age of 74, I was again arrested for my continued activities as a Catholic priest. I was sentenced to serve another ten-year term as a Laogai slave. In 1988, I was released fully as a token of good will towards Filipino Bishop Sinhemai. I was 81 years old at the time of my release.

I served a total of thirty-three years in the Laogai. I can't begin to tell you how many people disappear completely for every one that survives. Thank you for inviting me here. I hope I have helped you gain an understanding of the Communist government's willingness to use the Laogai to destroy its citizens lives.

TESTIMONY OF **PALDEN GYATSO**, LAOGAI SURVIVOR

BEFORE THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

APRIL 3, 1995

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have spent 33 years of my 64-year-old life in Chinese prisons and Laogai camps in Tibet. During those years I yearned for a moment such as this one. I express my wholehearted thanks to you, Mr. Chairman, and to all the members of this Committee for giving me this great opportunity to appear before you today. I feel that it is an honor, but also my reponsibility, to inform the United States Congress about the mistreatment I and other Tibetans have suffered in the Laogai at the hands of the Chinese government.

My name is Palden Gyatso. I became a monk when I was ten years old. At 28 years of age in 1959, at the climax of the Chinese military invasion of Tibet, I was arrested and accused of being a "reactionary element" and sentenced to a seven-year prison term to be served at the Panam District Prison in southern Tibet. This prison was previously a monestary named Norbu Khyungtse. In the prison, I was made to do hard labor, ordinarily for nine hours a day, and some times even more. We prisoners were yoked to plows like animals to till prison lands. When we got exhausted and became too weak to pull the plow, we were kicked and whipped from behind. Since we were never given enough to eat, we were forced to steal food meant for the pigs in the Chinese pig sties. We were also driven to chewing and eating things like used leather items, bones of different kinds of dead animals, mice, worms, and all kinds of green grasses.

The treatment of political prisoners at the Laogai in Tibet involves different types of cruel acts. In winter, we were suspended in the air and then cold water was thrown on us; during hot summer days, cold water was replaced by building a fire beneath the suspended prisoner. Other forms of ill-treatment in this position included being lashed with a leather belt and being beaten with an electric cattle-prod or an iron bar. Our feet were also fettered with iron manacles while self-tighening handcuffs and thumb-cuffs were used to tie our hands and thumbs. The sharp edges on those handcuffs often resulted in prisoners hands getting cut completely off. I still have many scars on my wrists as a result of these sharp instruments.

In 1962, I managed to escape from Panam District Prison with six other political prisoners. But we got caught just when we reached Tonsher township to worship near the Indo-Tibetan border, and my prison term was increased to 15 years as a result. The imposition of the additional eight year prison term was preceded by indiscriminate beatings, then the use of iron shackles on both my hands and feet, night and day for six months. The leg shackles were not removed for more than two years, during which I was taught how to, then forced to, weave carpets.

Mr. Chairman, I completed my Laogai term in 1975 but was not allowed to return home. Rather, I was sent to the Nyethang Laogai

camp, located some 15 miles west of Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. Prison life resumed, though with a slightly relaxed atmosphere. In 1979, I took advantage of this to sneak out of the Laogai camp in the middle of the night to go to Lhasa, where I put up a number of posters calling for Tibetan independence. I was finally caught, and on August 26, 1983, I was rearrested and sent to the Old Sangyip Prison in northeastern Lhasa.

In April 1984, I was sentenced to a nine year prison term during a one hour trial where I was denied legal representation or opportunity to defend myself. I was taken to the Outidu Prison Fourth Unit, which is today a part of the Sangyip Prison Adminstration in the remote northeast valley of Lhasa, in April of 1985. In that Laogai, we had to do all sorts of filthy work, including the handling of human excrement used to grow vegetables. Sometimes we were forced to do the personnal work of the prison guards. But the guards routinely expresses dissatisfaction with our work and often beat us afterwards. We were also often subjected to other abuses by drunken prison guards.

Other forms of ill-treatment at the Laogai were rampant. For example, in November 1987, a prison official poked me with an electric cattle-prod and poured boiling water over me just because he said he did not like my attitude. No medical treatment was given after that.

Throughout my 15 year imprisonment that started in 1959 and the nine year confinement in the Laogai thereafter, I was never allowed any visits or meetings with my relatives and family members.

In November 1987, five prisoners from Guojo District in eastern Tibet, imprisoned at Gutsa Prison in Lhasa, were sentenced and two of them put to death. On the day of the announcement of the sentences, all of the prisoners of Gutsa Prison (near Sangyip) were ordered to attend. The two prisoners who were sentenced to death were told by the Chinese police that since the were to be executed in two days, they should sing loudly and dance in front of the crowd of other prisoners. They were forced to comply with this order with their iron leg and hand shackles on. Many prisoners cried spontaneously and even the Tibetan officials looked saddened by the spectacle. I was told this story by a number of nuns and others who were in that prison at that time. Such a sorry state of affairs clearly shows that there really are no rights at all for prisoners in Tibet.

In another incident around that time, police guards at Gutsa Prison repeatedly raped nun political prisoners then sexually violated them with electric cattle-prods. Before thrusting the cattle-prod into the sexual organ of one, the assailant said, "You have not yet experienced this." The name of this prison guard is Sonam Tsering; he was still on duty when I escaped from Tibet. Such is the conduct of the police, who we are also told are humanitarians.

Mr. Chairman, I was transferred from Outidu Prison to the nearby Drapchi Prison, known as the "Tibet Autuonmous Region" Number One Prison on October 13, 1990. Immediately upon my arrival, the chief adminstrator of the prison's Fifth Unit, a man named Paljor, asked me, "I see you have been imprisoned three times. What brought you here this time?" I replied, "I was arrested because I had put up posters saying Tibet is an independent country, seperate from China."

He replied, " I will give you Tibetan independence." He then proceeded to give me a number of vicious kicks and intermiitently jabbed the electric cattle-prod on various parts of my body. Finally, after about half an hour, he rammed the cattle-prod into my mouth and pushed it in with great force. I passed out. When I regained consciousness, I found myself in a pool of blood and excrement and in extreme pain. No medical treatment was given. I lost most of my teeth.

In April 1991, Ambassador James Lilley, then Ambassador to China, came to visit the Drapchi Prison. I, along with some of my fellow prisoners, presented him with a petition detailing the torture and suffering at the prison. But it was snatched away from his hand and given over to the head of prison adminstration. After the ambassador left, two political prisoners, Lobsang Tenzin and Tenpa Wangdak, were detained in solitary confinement while being interrogated. Together with three other prisoners, they were later transferred to the Powo Tramo Laogai Camp in southeastern Tibet. That day, the Army was called in and all of us political prisoners were beaten with rifle butts or stabbed with bayonets. The sticks and electric prods used to beat us were almost all broken from the verocity of the beatings. Ngawang Kunga, a political prisoner, was beaten until he lost consciousness with an iron chain used to tie a prisoner's legs. Ngawang Phuljung lost consciousness after he was beaten with a rifle but to his temple. Phurbu Tsering was stabbed with a bayonet, causing a deep vertical cut in the back of his head which bled tremendously. The list of those beaten is too long to enumerate. The latter two are still in the same prison today.

I would humbly request, Mr. Chairman, that in the future visits to the prisons by US officials, that there be substantial follow-up to ensure that these sorts of atrocities are not committed against political prisoners who are simply trying to provide information about the true situation and conditions of prisons in Tibet.

I have recounted only a few instances of the inhumane atrocities committed against Tibetan prisoners in the Laogai. Tibetans still continue to be subjected to untold terrors day and night, and I appeal to your conscience to seek their freedom. Many instances of brutal ill-treatment of prisoners in Drapchi Prison in Tibet have come to light recently. In June 1993, for example, fourteen nuns were found to have clandestinely composed and recorded a freedom song, resulting in a brutal beating. A 20-year-old nun named Phuntsok Yangkyi died. The other thirteen suffered varying degrees of permanent physical impariments, with one 18-year-old nun named Ngawang Sangdol having both hands deformed.

Despite the sweltering heat and the fetid atmosphere, prisoners are required to remain in the greenhouses all day, year round, to grow vegetables and sell them in the market in Lhasa. While not being paid for their work, the prisoners who fail to fulfill their quotas are punished and liable to have their prison terms extended. The health of many prisoners has been effected by continual exposure to the greenhouse atmosphere, rendering them barely conscious of the surroundings.

On August 25, 1992, I finished my prison term and was finally released from prison. Thirteen days later i escaped from Tibet. Before escaping, I made arrangements to acquire some of the

instruments of torture in order to show them to the outside world. I have brought a few of them here to show to you. One is the type of electric cattle-prod that was rammed into my mouth and also the sexual organs of nun political prisoners. This is the type of thumb-cuff that is used to tie the detainees diagonolally across their backs by the thumbs. This is one of the special type of knives used by the Chinese police to stab prisoners. These are just some of the torture instruments used in the Laogai of Tibet.

Mr. Chairman, the Tibetan people have been suffering under the repressive Chinese rule since 1949. Thousands and thousands of innocent Tibetans have lost their lives and the six million that remain are struggling to keep the Tibetan culture alive under very difficult conditions.

As the power dynamics in Beijing shift over the next several months, there will be a tremendous opportunity for the international community to foster a more democratic society in China. I appeal to you and to the United States government to remain vigilant in your effort to hold China accountable for its actions against the Tibetan people.

Just a few weeks ago, I testified before the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights, where a resolutoin condemning China's human rights violations against both Tibetan and Chinese people was narrowly defeated. This was a very important effort, and I humbly urge your government to return to Geneva next year with a renewed effort concerning human rights in Tibet and China. I sncerely believe that unless there is strong international condemnation of the Chinese government's treatment of the Tibetan people, they will continue to commit such horrors as described earlier against innocent political prisoners who insist on the fundamental rights of freedom of speech, association, and religion, as well as the recognized right of self-determination.

I am exceedingly grateful to you Mr. Chairman, and to all memebers of this Committee, as well as all others for listening to this short description of my life in the Laogai in Tibet. I am only one of the few lucky ones who survived and managed to escape to the outside world. Many of my friends and other political prisoners died in the prisons and Laogai in Tibet. With them also went the story of their untold sufferings.

I thank you Mr. Chairman. *Tashi deleg!*

8. Drapchi Prison. A main camp for political prisoners located in northwest Lhasa. (Palden Gyatso)

9. Utritu Prison. Established in 1988.

The Chinese Government has built more Laogai camps in Tibet since 1959 than the total amount built throughout Tibetan history. (Palden Gyatso)

TESTIMONY OF **LIU XINHU**, LAOGAI SURVIVOR

BEFORE THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

APRIL 3, 1995

My name is Liu Xinhu.

Because my father was an official in the former government, the Communist Party, on the pretext that he would disrupt labor discipline, arrested and sent him to a "reeducation through labor" (*laojiao*) prison camp in 1958. He was sent to the Baimaoling Farm to serve his sentence. In 1973, having lost all hope and deeply impoverished in the hell of the hard labor farm, he committed suicide.

I was born in 1945. When I was 13 years old in 1958, because I was the eldest son in the family of a counter-revolutionary, the Communist government found an excuse which had absolutely no legal precedent, and sent me to live at the same Laogai prison farm as my father. In 1964, when I had just turned eighteen years old, the Communist government sentenced me to two years reeducation through labor because of what they called "counter-revolutionary activities". After being released from the *laojiao* sentence at the farm in 1966, I was ordered to continue forced labor at the farm as a "forced-job-placement" (*jiuye*) worker. I was once again labeled a "counter-revolutionary element" in 1974 because of my "political attitudes", and the contols over me at the Laogai prison farm were further strengthened. I was detained straight through until my release in 1983. During the twenty-five years I spent in the Laogai, I suffered innumerable beatings and torments; I clearly remember one occasion when I was unable to fulfill my production quota because I was very sick, the public security police stripped me of my clothes, tied me to a tree trunk, and allowed the mosquitoes and insects to bite me for more than two hours.

The Baimaoling Farm is internally known as the Shanghai Number Two Laogai General Brigade. It is located in the southeast area of Anhui Province. Its scale is enormous and it holds, on average, 50,000 Laogai prisoners, *laojiao* prisoners, and *jiuye* personnel. It produces tea, rice, valves, and toys, as well as other goods. My father and I were detained in different sections of the farm, and we were not permitted to see each other. The public security police only told me in 1973 that he had died, and I had to go and claim the corpse. Once at the crematorium, I saw his cold and pale body. I was given these clothes. I cried bitterly. I felt that my father was more brave than I was because he dared to determine his own end to his difficult life and gain his freedom.

I now live in the United States and have a family and children of my own. I deeply hope that my children and all other children, as well as all future generations, do not have ever to suffer through these kinds of tortures and difficluties. Thank you all very much for your concerns about the Chinese citizens who continue to suffer in the Laogai to this very day.

10. Right signboard reads: Shanghai Number 2 Laogai Brigade
Middle signboard reads: Shanghai Baimaoling Farm
Left signboard reads: Chinese Communist Party Committee of Baimaoling Farm

This camp contains 50,000 to 60,000 Laogai prisoners. Although it is located in Anhui Province, it is managed by the Shanghai Municipal government.

The location of a Laogai is not important since the entire system is controlled by the Communist Party. (Liu Xinhu)

11. This picture shows the Number 2 section of Baimaoling Farm. Behind this wall, toys and Christmas tree lights are manufactured for export. (Liu Xinhu)

12. The crematorium at Baimaoling Farm. This Laogai camp is so large that it needs its own facility. (Liu Xinhu)

13. Baimaoling Laogai Camp is a large agricultural farm also. Tea is one of its main export products. In the People's Republic of China, one-third of the total national tea output comes from the Laogai camps. (Liu)

14. Every prisoner in the Laogai has a daily production quota. If the production quota is not met, then the prisoner is subject to some form of punishment.

The
Laogai
Research Foundation
勞 改 基 金 會

1

TESTIMONY OF HARRY HONGDA WU, LAOGAI SURVIVOR

BEFORE THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

APRIL 3, 1995

My name is Harry Wu.

I was born in Shanghai in 1937. During my second year of college, in 1957, the students were encouraged by the Communist Party to express their opinions and concerns about the direction of the country. Although I initially kept quiet, in the end I offered a few criticisms, including my opinion that the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 was a violation of international law and my feeling that the Communists were treating the common people as second-class citizens. Because of these comments, I was denounced as a 'capitalist counter-revolutionary rightist'. At that time, at least 550,000 other intellectuals and students also were labeled as 'capitalist counter-revolutionary rightists' for similar public criticisms of the Communist government. The Party used this movement to single out and remove the dissenters in the general population.

Following my comments, I was arrested and sentenced in 1958, without a trial, to life in a Reeducation Through Labor camp because of my "poor political attitude". My life sentence was mostly a result of my family's political background in Shanghai. While I was held in the Laogai, my mother died. I found out fifteen years after her death that she had committed suicide by taking sleeping pills shortly after she was told I had been arrested. I discovered this only after I had returned to Shanghai to collect her ashes.

In 1961, after having served three years already, the government reduced my life sentence to three years. After serving my new three-year term, yet imprisoned since 1958, the authorities decided to extend my sentence again because of my reform performance. In 1964, I was given an indefinite extension. I was held in the forced labor camps without a trial until December 1969. At that time, however, I was not released from the forced labor camp and allowed to return home. Instead, I was forced to resettle permanently at a Laogai coal mine and serve as a forced-job-placement personnel. I was finally released from the Laogai system in 1979.

I spent my 19 years in the Laogai at twelve different Laogai camps. I was forced to do slave labor at an agricultural farm, a chemical factory, a steel plant, and a coal mine. I was regularly denied food and nearly starved to death. Torture permanently damaged my back. I had my arm broken during a beating. I had to become a beast in the Laogai so that I could fight to survive day after day. Today, all over the so called new China, there are millions still fighting to survive in the Laogai.

P.O. Box 361375, Milpitas, CA 95036-1375 USA

2

DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF THE LAOGAI

The following statement is only a brief summary of the definition and the organizational structure of the Laogai system. It also provides the Laogai Foundation's formula for the estimated number of prisoners presently detained in the Laogai, numbers which differ from those given to the public by the Chinese Communist government.

Every totalitarian regime must have a means to control and suppress opposition. The Nazis in Germany had their concentration camps which housed those peoples whose religion or race were different from the Germanic people. When the tide of the war changed, these concentration camps became the scene of mass executions as Hitler carried out his "final solution".

The Gulag of the former Soviet Union played a large role in the Soviet Communists' drive to remove "White Russians" in the early days of the revolution, and later the Gulag served as the final destination to those who dared to oppose Stalin and other Soviet leaders.

Although the Laogai is similar in form to the Soviet Gulag, which served as the theoretical model for the Soviet-trained internal police of the Chinese Communist Party, the function of both the Laogai and the use of the prisoners in it are vastly different. The language of the Laogai, the terms laojiao and jiuye which are translations of 1930's Soviet terms, is taken from the Gulag model. But Mao and the Chinese Communists adapted the Laogai into functioning as a primary tool of the "people's democratic dictatorship" in fighting dissent within the population in a constantly ongoing "class struggle". The function of the Laogai is to remove "counter-revolutionaries and other criminal offenders" from the overall population and place them under the strict supervision of the state so that they can go through "thought reform" and "reform through labor" and be reshaped into "new socialist persons." The prisoners are forced to do hard labor, such as in land development or construction brigades, or engage in the production of goods for profit in active economic enterprises as partof their reform process. But it is in the further political meaning of the Laogai, where arrests and sentences are based as much on political standing or class background as on criminal activity and where the constant brainwashing of the thought reform is critical to the reform process, that the world can see the true nature of the Communist regime in China.

The term laogaidui is a blanket phrase to describe the entire Chinese labor reform camp system. The system comprises a national complex of prisons which in terms of scope, numbers of camps and prisoners, degree of cruelty, and violation of human rights far surpasses the terrible Soviet Gulag. The system is made up of six principle components;

- Reform-through-labor (Laodong gaizao) camps
- Reeducation-through-labor (Laojiao) camps
- Prisons
- Forced-job-placement (Jiuye)
- Detention Centers
- Juvenile Offender Camps

This summary will concentrate on defining the laogai, laojiao, and jiuye components, although the other component's population will also receive attention later in this testimony. It is critical in understanding the Laogai to know that both thought reform and reform through labor are integral in the operations of all of the divisions mentioned above.

Laogai is literally translated into English as "reform through labor". This phrase is not only accurate to describe the role of the labor reform system, but also exactly describes the daily lives of the prisoners in the camps. The Laogai was deliberately erected by the Chinese Communist government "to punish and reform all counter-revolutionaries and other criminals" whereby "the process of labor reform of criminals...is essentially an effective method of purging and eliminating all criminals and counter-revolutionaries." Those are exact quotes from Chinese Public Security Bureau authorities in the 1950s. The following passage was published in 1988, and shows the role of the Laogai in present day China;

> "..The primary task of our Laogai facilities is punishing and reforming criminals. To define their functions concretely, they fulfill the tasks in the following three fields: punishing criminals and putting them under surveillance; reforming criminals; organizing criminals in labor and production, thus creating wealth for the society."
> Criminal Reform Handbook, Ministry of Justice Laogai Bureau

It is clearly evident that the function of the Laogai has remained constant throughout its history, even in the so called "new" China under Deng Xiaoping.

Far from finding the Laogai an outdated leftover of the Mao era, Deng has continuously stressed maintaining the Laogai's role. Deng has strengthened the Laogai system by further defining its function in the constant class struggle. He has also pushed the the Laogai to reform and reorganize its production structure to compete in the modernization drive. Deng himself has written;

> "...In a socialist society, there will still be counter-revolutionaries, hostile elements, various types of criminals who disrupt the social order, corrupt thieves and robbers, and new exploiting opportunists...Although their struggle is not the same as the historical inter-class struggle (it is impossible for them to openly constitute a public class), it should still be regarded as a special type of class struggle, or perhaps as a special type of class struggle that can still exist under the conditions of a socialist society. It is still necessary for us to exercise the power of the dictatorship over these people. If we do not subject them to

> the dictatorship, then it will be impossible to have democratic socialism."
> Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, Beijing People's Press, 1979.

It is in its role as a "tool of the dictatorship of the proletariat" that the Laogai proves its value to the Communist regime.

On October 17, 1989, at a conference in Shanghai, the Ministry of Justice publicly cited a list of "National Ministry of Justice collectives outstanding in preventing chaos and controlling violence". This list contained fifty units, thirty of which were Laogai units. Obviously these thirty Laogai units were singled out for their role in imprisoning many students, workers, and other protesters involved in the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989. Citizens involved in, or even associated with, the pro-democracy movement, human rights activities, and trade union organizing, as well as any other such "bad elements" are still regularly removed from the society and condemned to the Laogai.

The Laogai has been liberally employed in the many class movements of the Communists since 1949. There have been millions of political arrests made in these movements. Over the course of the 45 years of Communist rule, this political style of arrest has proved to be the most common form of arrest. These arrests follow a directive from the central leadership that defines what behavior is to be identified as illegal and who constitutes an "object of the dictatorship". On average, there has been a political movement every two or three years during the Communist rule in China. Some of the major movements include;

1991: Strike Serious Blows Movement
1989: suppression of the Tiananmen Democracy Movement
Attack on Economic Criminals Movement
1986-1987: Movement to oppose "capitalist revisions"
1983: Swiftly and Severely Attack Criminals Movement
1982: Movement to oppose spiritual pollution
1979: Movement to suppress the Beijing Democracy Wall
1978: Movement to oppose the Gang of Four
1975: Counter-attack On Rightists Attempting to Restore the Old Order
Suppression of the Qing Ming Festival Tiananmen Incident
1971: One Blow and Three Oppositions Movement
1966-1976: the Cultural Revolution
1964: the Four Clean Ups Movement
1960-1962: Three Years of Natural Disaster
1958: Great Leap Forward, People's Communes, Party Line Movement
1957: Anti-Rightists Movement
1955: Eliminate Counter-revolutionaries Movement
Anti-Hu Feng Counter-revolutionary Clique Movement
1953: Collectivization of Agriculture Movement
1952: Three Oppositions, Five Oppositions Movement
1951: Suppress Counter-revolutionaries Movement
1950: Agrarian Revolution Movement

So far there has been no official report or authoritative

investigation into exactly how many have been arrested, sentenced, and executed in the course of these various movements. But the total for each movement probably exceeds one million. It is precisely this application of the Laogai in the political movements and class struggle of the Communists that make its scope so much more advanced than its predecessor, the Gulag. Another primary difference is the efficiency of the Laogai in forcing its prisoners to work and thus fully utilize its production capabilities.

Initially in the 1950s, the entrepreneurial management of the Laogai was not very developed. One reason for this was the special emphasis placed at that time in maintaining social stability and support for the new regime by suppressing opposition. Another reason was that for the most part all Laogai work was directed towards railroad construction, mining, reclamation of wasteland, water conservation projects, and similar large-scale labor intensive projects
that required no special management. The use of the Laogai prisoners in this type of work continues in the development projects of the Chinese inland provinces like Guangxi, Qinghai, Xinjiang, and Tibet. Many of China's mine enterprises are in fact Laogai camps. Water conservancy projects, like the ongoing Three Gorges Dam construction project, regularly use Laogai labor and construction materials like cement made at Laogai factories. The Loagai has contributed, and continues to contribute, thousands upon thousands of slave-like, manual laborers to the Communists government's development and modernization plans. But like the Chinese economy itself under Deng's leadership, the Laogai has been forced to diversify.

The Laogai system forces its prisoners to plant, harvest, engineer, manufacture and process any imaginable product that can be sold either domestically in the new Chinese consumer-based economy or in the international market. Laogai policies clearly state, "our Laogai facilities are both special schools for (reforming) Laogai prisoners and special state-owned enterprises". These "special" Laogai enterprises have become an indispensable component of the national economy. Some Laogai enterprises, camouflaged under phony business names and advertised as "state-run enterprises", are well known both domestically and internationally. The wealth the products from these Laogai enterprises add to the government's coffers is greater then that earned by many of the much written about and heavily subsidized state enterprises. They turn out about one-half of the nation's rubber products, one-third of the nation's tea, grapes for Remy Martin, coal for sale to Great Britain, press machines and diesel engines for sale to the United States, and many, many other goods. The Laogai is so productive, the Beijing government never encounters financial problems funding it. Under the government's "responsibility system", which forces all enterprises to become less dependent on the central government for capital support, the Laogai has been more productive than ever. And more profitable.

There can be no denial that this is clearly state-run slavery. The Chinese government has engaged in not only the political persecution of its citizens in condemning them to the Laogai, but it has also forced these prisoners to labor for the development and profit of the Communist regime.

6

When the Laogai has faltered in the face of new threats, the Communist government has simply broadened its application. The laojiao and jiuye policies are both components of the Laogai system that were created to satisfy immediate needs of the dictatorship.

Laojiao plays a very unique role in the Laogai system. It was created as a less extreme alternative to prison or reform through labor. The Communists created laojiao in the late 1950's after they had nearly eliminated all of the "enemies of the revolution" from the former Nationalists and "capitalist classes". In August 1956, a Communist document titled "Directives Concerning the Thorough Purging of Hidden Counter-revolutionaries" noted, "Two methods may be employed to deal with those purged during the Liquidate Counter-revolutionaries Movement. One method is arrest and conviction followed by labor reform. The other method is laojiao". The first group of citizens subject to laojiao were approximately 200,000 political prisoners from the Liquidate Counter-revolutionaries Movement. Of the 500,000 total citizens targeted during this movement, approximately 60% were convicted, then executed or sentenced to Laogai. The remaining 40% were never tried or convicted, but were deemed "not worth sentencing but too dangerous to leave around." Obviously not just simple vagrants or petty criminals, these "offenders" were thus detained under laojiao regulations. Laojiao was even more widely applied in the Anti-Rightists Movement of 1957, when nearly one million intellectuals and students were targeted and large numbers were arrested.

Deng Xiaoping, at the time the Communist Party Central Committee General Secretary and Anti-Rightist office chief, noted in an address, "The contradictions between the capital- class rightists and the people is a contradiction between the enemy and ourselves...it's antagonistic nature cannot be mitigated for it is a life and death struggle". During this movement, which followed the 'Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom and a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend' invitation by Mao to the people "to speak what they think, without reserve or fear of reprisals", over 550,000 "capital-class rightists" and 400,000 "mid-rightists", "rightist sympathizers", "protectors of rightists", and "reactionaries" were identified and detained according to laojiao policy. Laojiao was the excuse used to began removing those threats to the Communists that came from within the general population itself. The Communists created the laojiao policy to rectify the problem of how to identify and remove serious criminals who existed inside the Communist movement, as opposed to those who could be easily convicted and sentenced as "enemies of the revolution." The Public Security Police had precedent in the laojiao policy to arrest common people whose "crimes" were political in nature but were not connected to the Nationalists or "capitalist class".

Administratively a component of the Laogai, laojiao is translated "reeducation through labor", but that is only a cosmetic difference. The true significance of laojiao is that it is defined as the "highest administrative discipline". This means one can be sentenced to laojiao without any judicial hearing or trial whatsoever. Since laojiao prisoners are subject to both thought reform and reform through labor identical to that found in the Laogai camps for convicted prisoners, it is the fact that one can be arrested and

sentenced for up to three years without the "inconvenience" of a trial that shows the absolute treachery of the Communist government. The fact that laojiao is a critical component of the Laogai is clearly stated in a passage from the Legal Quarterly published by the Southwest Political Science and Law Institute dated April, 1983;

> "(Laojiao) creates a level between peacekeeping management and legal sentencing...to bridge the gap between light and serious offenses by creating a closely knit, reasonable three-tired system... it allows us to avoid complicated judicial procedures... and serves useful function in allowing a swift response to societal threats."

The Public Security and Justice authorities are not impeded by any burden of proof to substantiate its case since there is no trial. In fact, the laojiao administration itself is the sole body responsible for reviewing and examining the evidence involved in a laojiao case. Furthermore, the term of service of a prisoner sent to laojiao after the case has been decided and approved is then determined by the laojiao facility itself. The terms of the sentence can be further extended by the laojiao facility if a prisoner exhibits either poor reform or labor behavior. The laojiao policy gives the Communist government the means to condemn a citizen to the Laogai at any time, under any number of vaguely defined charges, and for an indefinite period of time.

The Communists publicly hide the laojiao by stating it is a part of the public social security and welfare system, but it remains administratively under the Public Security Ministry. According to official explanations, loajiao is not a criminal proceeding since it is "highest level administrative discipline". Laojiao subjects are not criminals, they are referred to as "personnel" or "students". Many laojiao facilities are referred to as "special schools". This duplicity on the part of the Communist regime has led to foreign misunderstanding of the true role of laojiao as an active component of the Laogai. Laojiao subjects are organized in exactly the same military fashion as convicted Laogai prisoners. Styles and methods of labor production and thought reform are exactly alike. Since laojiao prisoners are not called prisoners, they are paid very low wages to maintain this appearance. Their housing is supervised by the Laogai administration and is essentially the same as the convicted Laogai prisoners. Food is controlled and rationed. Mail and visits from relatives are limited and strictly supervised. All packages are first opened and inspected and any items considered inappropriate are confiscated.

As more Chinese citizens dare to question the government and demand better legal representation and judicial procedures, laojiao is becoming more and more widely used. The government has the ability to arrest any citizen deemed a "social threat", avoid a judicial proceeding, and sentence the "criminal" to imprisonment in the laojiao camps. Recent cases like the maximum three-year laojiao sentence given to labor union activist Zhou Guoqiang, who was arrested after printing t-shirts carrying labor rights slogans, or the two and a half-year sentence given to pro-democracy activist Tong Yi, a secretary of Wei Jingsheng, show how laojiao is routinely

employed by the Communist government.

There is a popular saying in the Laogai that goes, "There is an end to Laogai or laojiao, but jiuye is forever". For many prisoners in the Laogai, in fact more than 90% of Laogai prisoners before 1980, there is never full release from the system. There is only forced-job-placement. The purpose of the forced-job-placement, or jiuye, policy is stated,"..to fully implement labor reform policies and ensure public security." Since nearly all Chinese rely on the government for job assignment or placement, a released prisoner must go where his job placement takes him. For many, they simply remain at the Laogai camp and continue working as a jiuye person. It is thus rather apparent that jiuye is part of, or an extension of, the Laogai. The Communist regime realizes that it cannot trust the former Laogai prisoners since these people have seen the true nature of the dictatorship while imprisoned and may be more dangerous in the society after their sentences than before. The Laogai also needs to keep personnel who are experienced in the labor or production at the camps to supervise and manage the constant inflow of new prisoners. The jiuye personnel are no longer technically prisoners, and may be called "legitimate workers" by the system, but they are still under the supervision of the Laogai. Their activities, assignments, wages, incentives, punishments, and thought reform activities are all controlled by the Laogai. They are forced to "continue reform" within the Laogai, maybe even at the exact same Laogai camp, but they have been officially "released".

Within the definition of the Laogai lays its fundamental purpose, as well as its method of operation. Prisoners condemned to the Laogai will be "forced to labor" to "compel reform" and "become new socialist persons". Most new arrivals are subject to immediate, daily, day-long interrogation sessions and forced to admit their crimes. These session may last days, weeks, months or years. If a prisoner resists, he is subject to many types of physical torture. Only after a prisoner has admitted his crime is he "allowed" to labor. Prisoners are led in "political study" classes daily. The teachings of Mao Zedong-thought and socialism, along with official Communist propaganda, are the only topics of reading materials and discussions. "Struggle meetings" are held where prisoners criticize others who resist reform and may be forced to beat those who show "poor political attitude". Policies encourage informing and betrayal among the prisoners, and there is no concept of false incrimination.

The stated policy of the Laogai for the Communist Party is, "Reform first, Production second." Prisoners in the Laogai are to become "new socialist persons" through strict and forceful thought reform. This thought reform constitutes a total attack upon a prisoner's individual will in an attempt to transform them into Communist robots. The restrictions placed upon a prisoner's physical freedom is accompanied by the daily assault upon his or her own personality, morality, and thinking. The prisoner is subjected to constant propaganda and brainwashing. Communist songs and slogans are forced upon the prisoners to reinforce the superiority of the Party over its citizens. The willingness of the prisoner to receive and promote this political education is constantly judged by the police, and a prisoner can be punished for showing poor political

reform. The prisoner is not only forced to show his zeal for this political reform to the police and guards, but also he is to watch and inspect the political activities of his fellow prisoners and report any misbehavior to the authorities. Prisoners are encouraged to act as their own warden and maintain political awareness within the group. This continuous oversight reduces the prisoners' sense of human companionship and morality to blind allegiance to the orders of the police. They are encouraged to "stand together with the government" in renouncing their own beliefs, their religion, their social training, their sense of right and wrong. Those prisoners who resist this abandonment of their spirit and individual will are constantly faced with betrayal from a fellow prisoner who wishes to show his "reform attitude". The fear of physical torture is also a daily burden upon the prisoners. The prisoners are forced to constantly question their beliefs and motivations, recognize their faults, admit their crimes, and submit to the demands of the thought reform. The depth of the thought reform strips the prisoner of all human dignity and compassion and erases any sense of his own self. They are completely retrained to the moral structures of the Communist Party and its society. This mental transformation and submission is the primary objective of the Laogai, the second goal is labor production.

The quality of a prisoner's labor output is seen as an indication of whether or not he has truly reformed. Each type of work and each prisoner has a daily quota which must be met; otherwise, there are various forms of punishment for one who is "not following directions" or has a "lazy labor attitude". Other measures used to compel prisoners to labor are revoking prisoner's writing or receiving letters rights, solitary confinement, torture, and more "struggle meetings". Prisoner food is rationed and can be reduced or cut off for any reason by the police. Food rations are kept at barely subsistence level, but there is always an expected level of production and output.

These Laogai enterprises are very profitable year after year since there are no labor costs and because production numbers are constantly monitored and increased. The production of the Laogai is definitely an integral part of the Chinese Communist's drive to modernize in its "socialist market economy". The Laogai is most definitely state-sanctioned slave labor. The scope of the Laogai, however, is more difficult to define. In the past forty-five years, there has never been any statement or report from the Communist Party, the legislative organs, or the Department of Statistics regarding the total number of people who have been sent to the Laogai or even how many of the three types of personnel are currently detained in these camps. Because this is one of the Chinese Communist's most closely guarded secrets, it is impossible to obtain reliable statistics.

The information contained in Chart I is extracted from ten years of reports given to the National People's Congress by the Supreme People's Court. Because Deng Xiaoping announced he wanted to overhaul the judicial system and institute judicial procedure, since 1984 the head of the Supreme People's Court and the chief of the People's Procuratorate have made annual reports to the Congress.

However, the information contained in these reports is often fragmentary and misleading.

Despite certain oversights and omissions, the statistics contained in these reports are not entirely without value to a researcher. The Laogai Foundation, on the basis of various reports and information collected over ten years, can make the conservative estimate that during the last forty years, around 50 million people have been sentenced to the Laogai. Moreover, at present some 8 to 10 million are still confined in these camps.

The following is a brief analysis of these numbers, broken down with respect to the three types of personnel:

Convicted Labor Reform (Laogai) Criminals

As can be seen by examining lines 8-11 of Chart I, from August 1983 to December 1988, the highest annual average number of criminals arrested and sentenced is 598,000, the lowest is 325,000. Comparatively speaking, however, the annual averages from lines 8 and 10 are a bit more useful; looking only at these two time periods, we can see that the average number of criminals arrested and sentenced is about 500,000. There should be a directly proportional relationship between the crime rate and the number of criminals arrested and sentenced. On the basis of its own information, the Communist Party established the crime rate to be about 5 in 1,000, looking at the 1988 report (comparatively lower rates were reported in 1956 and 1965 - 3 in 1,000; comparatively higher rates in 1981 - 8.9 in 1,000- and 1982 - 7.4 in 1,000). It can be postulated that when the crime rate is about 5.2 in 1,000, the average number of arrested and sentenced criminals is 500,000. If we extend this estimate to cover the remaining forty years of Communist rule, the total number of those arrested and sentenced to the Laogai as convicted prisoners is approximately 20 million.

It must be emphasized that these figures are based completely upon analyses of the official Communist government information and, as such, do not accurately reflect the true state of affairs. The figure of 20 million should be used as a lower limit of the actual numbers arrested over forty years of Communist rule. There are two major categories of arrests for which even the Communist authorities themselves have trouble obtaining accurate statistics. In the past forty years, during the many political movements - for example, during the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution period; the 1950-1951 Movement to Suppress Counter-revolutionaries period; the 1955 Liquidate Counter-revolutionaries period; and the 1959-1961 Three Years of Natural Disaster period - frightening numbers of people were arrested and persecuted. Also, there have always been numerous secret arrests. The numbers involved in the two types of situations described above can only be estimated to be in the millions. The most conservative estimate: Over forty years, between 30 and 40 million people have been arrested and convicted.

As can be seen from the chart, among those arrested and convicted, the annually average of those sentenced to over five years or to unlimited terms or put to death can be determined from an analysis of lines 8 and 9 and can be sized at about 250,000

(similarly, this period's crime rate was about 5.2 in 1,000). If we assume that this type of criminal is incarcerated for an average of ten years, we can postulate that of those incarcerated as convicted prisoners in the Laogai in 1980, in 1990 somewhere around 2,200,000 still remain. Analyzing this information in a similar way, we can see that the annual average of those sentenced to under five years is about 320,000; calculating on the assumption of three years as an average term, in any given year there should be one million of these types convicted and sent the Laogai. These two types together total about 3,200,000 (we should also consider the huge numbers in detention centers who have not yet been sentenced). This 3,200,000 figure should be viewed as the lowest estimate on the numbers of arrested and sentenced convicted prisoners in the Laogai. According to the Laogai Foundation's research, the number of arrested and sentenced convicted criminals currently in the Laogai is between 4 and 6 million. The number of prisoners who are officially not calculated but are detained in the detention centers, county and municipal jails, and secret military prisons is probably around 1 million.

Reeducation-through-Labor (Laojiao) Subjects

Reeducation-through-labor policies have been in effect since 1957, a slightly shorter period of time than labor reform policies. Because the Communist Party announced that reeducation-through-labor policies are "high level government disciplinary actions," they are not considered judicial punishment, and so subjects do not go through judicial procedures such as arrest, examination, or sentencing. Therefore local public security bureaus do not have to submit reports to the courts or to the Office of the Procoratorate. Thus, there is no way for us to know exactly how many people, over the course of the history of laojiao, have been sentenced to the Laogai as reeducation-through-labor prisoners.

The Laogai Foundation, on the basis of its research and judging by the manner in which laojiao policies are carried out and by the fact that Laojiao camps exist in every province, estimates that at least 20 million people have been sentenced to the Laogai in the name of reeducation-through-labor. Moreover, in the Laogai today, there currently remain around 1 million laojiao prisoners.

In summary, the cumulative number of convicted Laogai and laojiao subjects confined in the Laogai system during the past forty-five years is conservatively around 50 million.

Forced-job-placement (Jiuye) Personnel

According to a 1984 Communist announcement entitled "Forced-job-placement Policies", of all the convicts who had served their entire term before 1980, about 80 to 90 percent were subjected to forced-job-placement. Over the span of forty-five years, about 40 million of these convicts were subjected to forced-job-placement at their own Laogai camps. Before 1980, only a very small number of people - special cases such as the former puppet-emperor of Manchuguo, Pu Yi, or high level Kuomintang generals, like Tu Li Ming and Shen Zuei - were not subjected to forced-job-placement after completing their terms or receiving amnesty.

Regardless of the severity of their sentences, convicted prisoners or laojiao prisoners could endure their hardships because they always knew the day would come when their terms would be over. Instead, when they were released, they were merely informed that they would be forcibly settled in a job within the confines of the Laogai. The real meaning of "job placement" is, "You are free, you have become a citizen once again, but you will work in the Laogai, you will live in the Laogai; your overseers will be public security police, you must continue to acknowledge your crimes, work hard, and reform your way of thinking." The 40 million people described above endure years of suffering and misery, torture and hardship. A few older prisoners, no longer able to labor, are sent back to their homes; some are announced to have been wrongly accused and are "rehabilitated" and sent back to their original work units. These are exceptions, however; since 1980 there still remains in the Laogai somewhere between 3 and 5 million jiuye personnel.

After 1980, changes were made in the jiuye policies and there was a decrease in the number of convicted prisoners and laojiao personnel who were subjected to forced-job-placement after their terms were completed. But forced-job-placement was not totally abandoned. Political prisoners whose sentences were for five years or more are still subject to forced-job-placement. Convicted criminal prisoners whose sentences were for ten years or more are still subject to forced-job-placement. Most repeat offenders are also still subject to forced-job-placement. Since 1980, it can be estimated that another 2 million people have been added to the total number of jiuye prisoners. On the basis of this analysis, the Laogai Foundation estimates the number of forced-job-placement personnel in the Laogai today must be somewhere between 8 and 10 million.

The Laogai Research Foundation hopes that the United States House of Representatives will become the first legislative body in history to condemn the Laogai and seek its dismantling. Such an action would create momentum around the world for other democracies to take similar action. Doing this would offer great hope to the millions of people still suffering within the confines of the Laogai.

SOURCE: Laogai: The Chinese Gulag. Harry Hongda Wu. Westview Press,1992.

ITEM NO.	PERIOD Mo/Yr No Mo	SENTENCED/PERIOD SENTENCED per yr	SENTENCED >5 YEARS % >5 YEARS no	SENTENCED <5 YEARS % <5 YEARS no	CRIMINAL RATE %	DATA SOURCE*
1	1956	**	**	**	.03%	ROSC-ZTS 6thNPC, 4thCO 04/08/1986
2	1965	**	**	**	.03%	same
3	1981	**	**	**	.089%	same
4	1982	**	**	**	.074%	same
5	1983	**	**	**	.06%	same
6	1984	**	**	**	.05%	same
7	04/84-02/85	470,000	**	**	.052%	ROSC-ZTS 6thNPC, 3rdCO 04/03/1985
	10 Mo	564,000				
8	08/83-12/85	1,395,000	42%	58%	052%	ROSC-ZTS 6thNPC, 4thCO 04/08/1986
	28 Mo	598,000	251,000	347,000		
9	01/86-12/86	325,000	**	**	052%	ROSC-ZTS 6thNPC, 5thCO 04/07/1987
	12 Mo	325,000				
10	03/83-12/87	2,047,800	38.18%	61.1%	.052%	ROSC-ZTS 7thNPC, 1stCO 04/01/1988
	52 Mo	472,600	180,400	292,100		
11	01/88-12/88	368,800	30.8%	68.7%	**	ROSC-RJX 7thNPC, 2ndCO 03/29/1989
	12 Mo	368,800	113,500	253,200		
12	01/89-12/89	482,700	**	**	**	ROSC-RJX 7thNPC, 3rdCO 03/30/1990
	12 Mo	482,700				

**: No Information

*ROSC: Report of Supreme Court; ZTS: the Chief of Supreme Court, Zheng Tian-Xiang; RJX: the Chief of Supreme Court, Ren Jian-Xing; _____NPC, _____CO: the _____Conference of the _____National People's Congress.

1. Right signboard reads: Beijing Number 1 Laogai Camp
   Middle signboard reads: Beijing Qinghe Farm
   Left signboard reads: Beijing People's Government, Qinghe Farm Office

Each Laogai camp has two different names. One name is used in the Punlic Security system, such as Number 1 Laogai Camp or Number 13 Prison. The second name is the public enterprise name, such as Qinghe Farm, XXX Coal Mine, or XXX Machine Works.

Harry Wu spent four years at this camp. (Harry Wu)

2. Vineyard at the Tuanhe Farm. The internal name is the Beijing Reeducation-through-Labor Camp.

Harry Wu spent four years at this camp. (Harry Wu)

3. The prisoners slave under the red banner, and according to the Communist slogans, "Through hard labor, make a new life."

While the prisoners are in the fields, the wardens mark out the resticted areas with red banners. Those crossing into the restricted areas are likely to be shot. (Harry Wu)

4. Forced labor prisoners at the Beijing Qinghe Farm. This photo was taken by CBS News "60 Minutes" cameras, 1991.

The Chinese government publicly states that its prison labor system is a form of job training. (Harry Wu)

5. Harry Wu was a geology major in college. Did he receive any "job training" while in the Laogai camps? (Harry Wu)

6. The wall slogan reads, "Labor production is the means. The main goal is reform." This clearly shows China's Laogai policy. The picture is of the Xinjiang Number 1 Prison. (Harry Wu)

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